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**LIFE OF**  
**MOTHER MARY OF SAINT MAURICE**



MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE.

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# LIFE OF MOTHER MARY OF SAINT MAURICE

Second Superior-General of the Society  
of Marie Réparatrice

BY

A RELIGIOUS OF THE SAME SOCIETY

Translated from the French by  
MARY CAROLINE WATT

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## INTRODUCTORY

ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE,  
PARIS, *26th February* 1920.

THE Life of the Rev. Mother Mary of St Maurice, Second Superior-General of the Society of Marie Réparatrice, will be read with pious interest and real edification.

Her gifts of nature and of grace, her generous fidelity to the call of God, the unworldly wisdom which she ever evinced, the prudence, at once strong and gentle, with which, for so many years, she governed her beloved congregation, are greatly to be admired.

I pray God to bless the book, and may it bring forth abundant fruit to His glory.

✠ LÉON-ADOLPHE, CARD. ARNETTE,  
*Archev. de Paris.*

# Mother Mary of Saint Maurice

ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE,  
RHEIMS, *7th February* 1920.

REVEREND MOTHER,

You have been good enough to submit to me the proofs of the Life of the Reverend Mother Mary of St Maurice, Second Superior-General of the Society of Marie Réparatrice.

I have perused them with great interest and have been deeply touched and edified as I read the letters in which Blanche Goulet relates to one of her friends the tale of her vocation, little dreaming that, one day, these intimate outpourings of her heart would be made public.

I felt pride when I reflected that this flower had blossomed in the garden of the Church at Rheims. I marvelled at the ways in which God leads His chosen ones. When the Son of God, the Incarnate Word, came to earth, He might have done so in riches, joys, power and honour; instead, He chose poverty, obedience and suffering. To the world this seems foolishness. But there were souls who recognised in this foolishness the Wisdom from on High, and from that time until our own day the world has beheld with amazement, with admiration and sometimes with envy, those who renounce all advantages of position and fortune voluntarily to embrace poverty, obedience and mortification. Blanche Goulet was one of

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these elect souls. The world offered her the pleasures eagerly sought after by men. She gave up all for God. She gave up her own will to follow obedience. The world proffers its joys: she turns away, to shut herself, at twenty years of age, in a cloister. Where had she learned ways so opposed to worldly wisdom? In her inmost soul she had listened to that Master who says in the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*: “I am He that in an instant elevateth the humble mind to comprehend more reasons of the eternal truth than if one read and studied ten years in the Schools.” Here is the Teacher who imparts to this young girl—this child—the intimate understanding of Divine Truths, which we admire in her letters.

As soon as she realises who it is that calls, she decides definitely, and nothing moves her from her purpose, and when, by dint of patience, firmness and sweetness, she has at last overcome all resistance and won consent, she breaks the links of the chain which binds her to earth and goes to the place where her Lord awaits her. God is generous. He loves to help those who please Him. The life of Mother Mary of St Maurice is a living proof of this fact. She gave her all to God in return, God refused her nothing. She left all for Him. He rewarded her by making all her undertakings to prosper. To her natural gifts of intelligence, good sense and sweetness He added

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the graces which He grants to those whom He raises to special dignity or vests with authority. The high ideals of Mother Mary of St Maurice, the nobility of her sentiments, the kindness of her heart, her delicate tact, her loyalty, her gracious bearing, her dignity and, above all, her supernatural graces, invariably inspired respect and confidence. Her daughters trusted her implicitly and loved her as a mother. When quite young she was made Assistant, first in Paris, then at Toulouse, afterwards at the Mother House. She had not attained to the necessary age, required by the constitutions of the congregation, when she was chosen to succeed the venerated Mother Foundress as Superior-General. After a period of twelve years, and again, after twenty-four years, she was unanimously re-elected in her high position. Under her able administration the foundations of the Society multiplied. She established fifteen Communities during the last five years of the 19th century. Her Society flourishes the wide world over, and her ecclesiastical Superiors, Roman Cardinals, Leo XIII and Pius X, who beheld and valued her work for God, warmly praised her. She was not without her sorrows. It was during her rule that laws were passed in France and Portugal proscribing the Religious Orders. But this trial, far from overwhelming her, only served to strengthen her submission to Divine Providence and her confidence in God.

## Introductory

Hers is indeed a life of virtue and good deeds, and it reflects great honour on the religious family of Marie Réparatrice.

It was well done to perpetuate her memory. I am glad, Rev. Mother, that you have done so, and I beg you to accept my very respectful greetings.

✠ L. Y. CARD. SUÇON,  
*Arch. de Reims.*

# Mother Mary of Saint Maurice

BISHOP'S PALACE,  
POITIERS, 29th February 1920.

VERY REVEREND MOTHER,

I have just read with deep interest the Life of the very Rev. Mother Mary of St Maurice. My memories, indeed, of her at Le Mans and in Rome are delightful, almost sacred. It has been very charming to, as it were, meet her once again in these pages, and to learn in what manner the Rev. Mother I knew and admired when she had reached such an exalted level of perfection embraced the Réparatrice Vocation. I am touched and gratified, Rev. Mother, at your desire that I should contribute these few words of introduction to this very edifying book. To peruse it, indeed, is to elevate the mind, and it will inculcate greater love for Our Lord. It is highly profitable to ponder on great souls who, like Mother Mary of St Maurice, have ever before their mind's eye their Eternal Destiny, and live to fulfil the end for which they were created. Unlike some lives, in which the Supernatural, alone, is visible, thus paralysing at the outset any attempt at imitation and also leaving in the background the very important factor of Free-will, the youthful Berthe, who was to become Mother Mary of St Maurice, is, in these pages, depicted as remaining faithful to her vocation, in spite of many and varied difficulties. Nature had endowed her with

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the most pleasing physical and moral qualities : she resisted the blandishments of the world which smilingly proffered a brilliant future. She declined advantageous proposals of marriage. Her father opposed her vocation, and his attitude caused keenest distress to the young girl who loved him dearly. She prays, she reflects, she waits—she suffers patiently, knowing that suffering accepted in a right spirit is especially pleasing to God—and, when the appointed hour at last has struck, and the obstacles are overcome and her father's consent won, Berthe gladly gives herself to God and hastens to the Convent of Marie Réparatrice. What Society, indeed, was better fitted to receive such an elect and ardent soul? Even as a novice, by her unselfishness, her love of privation and poverty and her sweetness, she indicates what she will one day become, the type of the perfect Réparatrice nun, mother of those who endeavour to console the forgotten and outraged Saviour of men. In the many journeys which she, as Superior-General, undertakes in order to visit her numerous Communities, or to establish new foundations, her great aim is ever that of inculcating in her religious family the spirit of self-immolation and reparation, and of increasing in her daughters the desire of being constantly before the altar in imitation of Our Lady at the Foot of the Cross, feeling true compassion and sharing in the sorrows inflicted on the Divine Lord by the sins of men.

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I trust, Rev. Mother, that these touching pages, which reveal the inner workings of a great mind, aiming ever to approach more closely to her sorrowing Master, may induce many to follow her example. What more beautiful vocation can be found for generous souls who despise the world than a life hidden in Christ Jesus? What more beautiful life than that of the *Réparatrice*?

And is not a life of reparation more than ever needful in these dark days of ours? The world, forgetful of the terrible lessons of the Great War, goes on neglecting its God, and foolish men, seeking to bury sorrow and pain, frantically seek after riches and pleasures. Even the so-called Christian is not entirely free from the taint of Paganism.

This book comes opportunely. It will have a very edifying effect on pious souls and it will awaken in many the desire to quit the things which are seen and temporal and to give themselves to the beautiful vocation of the *Réparatrice*. This, Rev. Mother, is my sincere wish, and it will be the true reward of the religious who has written these pages with a full heart and a great love for her who was the Second Superior-General of the Society of *Marie Réparatrice*.

I feel very grateful to the Author of this book, and I have read it with great pleasure. I now understand and appreciate the fascination exercised by Mother Mary of St Maurice over all who approached her.

## Introductory

Accept, Rev. Mother, my respectful greetings, and rest assured that I am, as ever, entirely devoted, in Our Lord, to the interests of your religious Society.

✠ OLIVIER MARIE,  
*Bishop of Poitiers.*



# LIFE OF MOTHER MARY OF SAINT MAURICE

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY YEARS.

THE elusive charm of some characters is indescribable. We can only attempt to give a mere outline of the life of Mother Mary of St Maurice, in nowise to penetrate deeply into every intricate detail of her very varied career.

The memory of her kindness of heart, her indefatigable zeal, her great moral force, is what we desire to perpetuate.

Mother Mary of St Maurice followed the well-known maxim of St Ignatius in that her charity consisted of practical deeds, not of mere mellifluous phrases and sentiments. Her deep humility and dislike, so to speak, of being in the foreground of the picture, make it no easy task to present a really satisfactory portrait of her fascinating personality, for, under an expansive exterior, was concealed an eminently strong and self-possessed soul, which only *lent* itself to those around, but *revealed* itself to none. We hope, however, in the following pages to be able to give some faint idea of the

## Mother Mary of Saint Maurice

great and noble influence which she exercised over all with whom she came into contact.

Berthe Blanche Goulet was born at Rheims on the 29th of June 1843.

It is surely a happy augury that the child, who in after years was to be so ardently attached to the Church and to the Holy See, should have first seen the light on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul.

Little Berthe was baptized in her Parish Church of Saint Maurice.

In those days the glorious churches of Rheims were all intact, and Berthe, who ever dearly loved the Cathedral, had finished her work on earth before those dark hours came, in which the tocsin called to arms the brave men of Champagne, while the majestic bulk of the great church shivered and crumbled under the shock of the bombardment. Happy for her that she did not live to see the ruin of so much beauty.

When Berthe was born the Goulet family consisted of a girl Herminie and a boy George. Her father was a thoroughly practical Christian; indeed, for generations religion had been upheld in Rheims by his family, which was cordially respected and esteemed by the townspeople and by the numerous workmen employed by M. Goulet in his various business undertakings.

Berthe was devotedly attached to her brother and sister, and her mother, a very gifted woman,

## Early Years

had a great influence for good in these happy childish days.

Madame Goulet's was, indeed, a remarkable personality. All her time was given up to her family and her various good works. She not only imposed respect, but inspired confidence and affection, and Berthe early became imbued with the ideals of zeal and energy, inculcated by her dearly-loved mother.

No very striking details of these youthful days are on record, but we may be very sure that the future religious was a frank, happy, unaffected child.

She was fond of games and riding. There is a tale of her having once tried to *climb* on to her horse, instead of waiting to be mounted in the usual way. Naturally she was speedily thrown off, and, luckily, escaped with sundry bumps and bruises.

Berthe may have been a joyous, merry child, she was certainly a *precocious* one. According to some of her early companions who survived her, she was extraordinarily intelligent and prudent for her years, and it is easy to imagine how much she was loved in her home circle.

Madame Goulet, however, with her deeply religious nature, felt that she would wish the good nuns to help her in her child's education, and Berthe accordingly was prepared for her First Communion and Confirmation by the Ladies

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of Nazareth. She was solidly grounded by these excellent teachers in her education, and later at the Monastère des Oiseaux, Rue de Sevres, she became really accomplished in various ways and was especially clever at drawing and sketching.

She was generous and sincere, and she had many faithful friends among her school companions. Anyone so unselfish was sure to be a general favourite. She hated argument, and kept her opinions to herself. Although she was naturally reserved and almost timid, and had not the faintest wish to lead, she was always bright and anxious to be kind and pleasant to all. She would willingly forgo some treat herself for another's benefit. As to her teachers, it is not necessary to tell of her affection for *them*. Her letters to Mother Thérèse show the gratitude towards them which she kept through her whole life.

Berthe always seemed to know exactly how to please those around her; she had, in a high degree, that delightful tact, which so greatly helps to oil the wheels of everyday life.

As a child she loved all games, and when she grew up she was equally delighted with all sorts of pleasures and gaieties. To be cheerful, indeed, if not exactly a virtue, is very often the *result* of virtue. For a really good person is seldom gloomy or melancholy. Berthe most certainly was not; she was so happy herself that she made everyone around her so.

## Early Years

She preferred country to town life, and was very keen on going out with the guns, and was even a very fair shot, becoming really excited when a covey of birds was put up.

Still, under this seeming frivolity, there was a firm, reflective mind. Somehow she could not rest content with the fleeting happiness surrounding her. Her thoughts were often far, far away in distant lands, and she was already eager to win the heathen for God.

In after years she confessed that at the time of her sister's marriage, when she looked at the expensive trousseau and jewellery, she thought to herself: "When *I* am married I will ask my *fiancé* not to give me lace and trinkets, but money to send to the Foreign Missions."

Later on, when she went into Society, she used to feel sad when she looked at women adorned with pearls and precious stones, thinking how the price of this finery might help Missionaries in their work of saving souls.

One little incident may be mentioned here. On her birthday, soon after she left school, her mother gave her 800 francs as a present. Berthe immediately put the money in an envelope, on which she wrote: "For the Propagation of the Faith," then accompanied by her maid and heavily veiled she left the packet at the Presbytery, asking the servant to give it to M. le Curé. She quite thought that no one would know who

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had left the parcel, and was somewhat perturbed when, a few days later, the good priest accosted her and her mother when they were out walking, and thanked Mlle Berthe very warmly for her handsome gift. She was obliged to relate the little transaction to her astonished mother who, no doubt, was proud and pleased at this proof of unselfish generosity in her daughter.

Heaven was waiting to reward the youthful ardent soul. The hour of great graces—of great sacrifices—the hour of the Call to the Higher Life was at hand.

## CHAPTER II.

### VOCATION (1862).

OUR heroine is now eighteen years old, and ready to "Come out," as the saying goes.

Berthe's maidenly charm, graceful bearing, sweet disposition and vigorous intellectual capacity rendered her eminently attractive; she knew how well fitted she was to adorn Society, and was prepared to enjoy herself to the full. She did not, as yet, realise that God alone could satisfy the inmost cravings of her heart.

Father Coleridge says the means employed by Heaven to draw destined souls to the Higher Life are as varied as strange, and it is a curious detail that Berthe, in her gay childish days, did not see her way to become a Child of Mary while at school. Naturally, the girls who aspire to the honour of bearing Our Lady's title are very much in evidence as examples to the others, and Berthe was not inclined to accept the responsibility. She knew, of course, that once settled at home she could very easily be affiliated to the sodality, and she took this important step (little dreaming how it was to influence her whole future) in the spring of the year 1861, just before starting on a

## Mother Mary of Saint Maurice

pleasure trip to Switzerland with her mother and brother.

Berthe was always very susceptible to beauty of every description, and during the journey she was absolutely enchanted at the marvellous panorama of scenery which unrolled itself before her eyes. She gazed upon the solemn mountain heights towering into the clouds and mists, alternating with the many yawning depths, and she was overwhelmed with the sense of Divine Omnipotence as compared with human frailty. She was, as it were, overpowered at the thought of the joys of Heaven, of which she imagined some pale reflection in the fair landscape outspread before her, and she began to despise earthly joys, their vanity and nothingness.

Thus she was in a fit state to receive from Heaven a very signal favour, which in her humility she carefully concealed from all around her, only disclosing her experience many years later to one of her daughters in religion—her devoted companion and friend.

The two were talking one day of the active part so frequently taken by the Blessed Virgin, in a number of the vocations to the Order of Marie Réparatrice. “It was Our Lady,” said Mother Mary of St Maurice suddenly, “who told me to enter Religion. I had never thought of taking such a step.” “Did you see her, then?” “Yes, it was while my mother, brother and I were

## Vocation

in Switzerland in 1861, just after I had become a Child of Mary." "And was it during the night?" "Yes, but I was not asleep." The tone and the hesitation of the last remark made further questions impossible, much as the nun who tells the incident longed to know more of the vision. Like Our Lord in the Gospel narrative, Mary had looked on her child and loved her, saying, "Come, follow me."

Berthe was at first startled and alarmed at the prospect of becoming a nun, but grace predominating, little by little her natural hesitation vanished, and the idea became firmly established in her mind. Before starting for home she began to take her brother into her confidence. George Goulet was extremely fond of his young sister and her news upset him greatly, but he did his best to persuade her and himself that it was merely a passing idea, and that all these notions would be forgotten as soon as they were once more safely at home. He was wrong: his little sister became more and more determined. She was, however, quite willing to defer to the opinions of others, and discussed the pros and cons of her religious vocation with them, just as if she had never received a special sign on the subject. She was prevented by her profound reserve and deep humility from trusting to her own feelings and from betraying Heaven's secret. She asked advice, she prayed a great deal, and left to God's good time the task

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of ripening gently the precious fruit, of which Our Lady had planted the seed in her young heart. Humble souls are generally very faithful. Berthe was ever true to her ideals. Her letters will show how she was able to resist all worldly attractions, and how she was helped to withstand even her beloved father's entreaties. However, none around her—not even her dearest friend—ever guessed how near she had been to the Unseen.

We trust that in making the following correspondence public, we may be useful to many who are strangely ignorant of the ways of the Almighty regarding religious vocation.

Some good people imagine that the certain signs of a call to the Higher Life are a shrinking from earthly joys—a leaning to solitude, mortification—in short, a natural inclination to self-immolation. All these attributes, excellent though they be, are by no means indispensable. One must love God, and love Him sufficiently to testify one's faith by the sacrifice (frequently a very heavy sacrifice) of self, despite the weakness of the flesh. This is the absolutely necessary foundation of all religious vocation.

St Paul has said: "When I am weak, then I am strong," and every religious, faithful to the rule of love and sacrifice, may repeat his words, adding the well-known text: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."

# Vocation

## *Letters from Berthe to a Friend.*

RHEIMS, *Saturday, 8th March 1862.*

DEAREST,—How cross I am with myself and with everything that has prevented my answering your delightful letter just when I was on the point of doing so. We are old enough friends, darling, for you to know that I have not forgotten you ; indeed I have been longing to write. But enough of excuses. I know you will understand and refrain from paying me back in my own coin by not answering my letter. I have so much to say, that I don't know where to begin. I know that I shall be very incoherent, partly because I am so pressed for time, that I can't write carefully, but principally because my mind is in such confusion that I really don't in the least know what I am doing. It seems a century since I last wrote to you. I have had such a delightful time during the Carnival. Every evening something was going on. It was charming, far nicer than I had expected it to be. You know, dear, I am not so very devoted to society, sometimes I dislike it all. I get tired of the eternal bowing and scraping and doing the polite, generally, but I am just a real baby about amusement and am never tired of fun. I know well that it is not a *lasting* joy all around me but, as I am never vain or envious of others, I am always very happy and I snatch every opportunity of enjoying myself. Last year I was rather timid, I hardly knew people—but now I can place them exactly, and I never feel the least bit shy. I am

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scribbling very fast, trying to seize my thoughts, as they flash into my mind. Were you to meet me now, you would be surprised at my serious views of life and its duties. I have changed very much. Though I often have absurd notions, just as I had when I was at the Convent, they only occupy a tiny corner of my mind. I am sure that, if, when I left school, I had been as I am now, equal to deciding my future life, by accepting or declining my various proposals of marriage, I should have been much more easy to please than I am at present. If everything had been suitable, and my parents satisfied, I should have been glad to be married; and as quickly as possible, too. Now, however, I look at all this so seriously, that mamma says I have gone from one extreme to the other, and that I am too indifferent when these delicate matters are discussed. I tell you as a great secret, my dear, that nothing interesting will be announced for a long, long time . . .

Your loving BERTHE.

A few weeks later we find the young girl confiding to her friend some of the perplexities with which God was pleased to try her faith.

She writes on 2nd May :

DEAREST,—You can't think how I appreciate having you for a friend. All that you say goes right to my heart. I know that all your arguments are most reasonable. My mind is so disturbed that sometimes I wonder whether it is God or the Evil One who is thus agitating me. I am tired of thinking and nothing serves to distract my

## Vocation

attention. Really, I feel inclined to do as others do and just enjoy the present, and leave the future to take care of itself, and try to be indifferent to what I imagined I had so deeply at heart. Is this possible do you think? I feel disposed to let everything slide. Circumstances, my parents, everything seems against me. The Retreat, which I was so counting on, won't come off till next month, perhaps not at all, anyway I shall not be at Rheims then. My parents are for ever trying to amuse me without much success. They are anxious about my health, to which they attribute fits of depression, which I do my best to hide. I really am quite pale and thin; it is just because I am so unsettled and worried. Mother Thérèse says it would not be right for her to influence me and my confessor says nothing at all. Now, to answer your various remarks. You begin with: "Many girls take as a sign of vocation what is merely the result of a vivid imagination." True, doubtless, my dear, but how to be sure? Again you say: "*Pride* may have something to do with it." Also very true, and especially so in my case. But as pride is mixed up in everything, I am sure I should be far from indifferent (were I to marry) to a fine position, money galore and full liberty, and you know I could have all these things to-morrow, so to speak, if I liked. You say, also, that some other fault or passion may be at the root of it all. Do help me, darling, to find out, I am at the end of my resources. Suppose we place ourselves under the protection of Our Lady and pray to her together during her

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approaching month? Alas, I don't feel in the least devout, and, though I suggest pieties to you, I am not at all sure of acting up to my good resolutions. What about Daily Mass during May, as many acts of self-abnegation as possible, and trying to keep down vain thoughts? If you can think of anything more let me know. I wish I did not feel so dreadfully flat about it all! Well, as Mary's child, I must try and please my Mother! I hope you will be able to read my beautiful scribble.

BERTHE.

*Monday, 12th May 1862.*

I was so very glad to hear from you. It is good of you to sympathise so sweetly; I know you will be thankful to hear that I do verily believe the worst of the difficulties to be over. Nothing is really decided, but, thanks to our dear little Mother Thérèse, everything looks more hopeful. I wrote to her to say how disappointed I was about missing the Retreat, and she replied at once that the Girls' Retreat was just beginning, and though she did not advise me to follow it entirely, as it would be hardly advanced enough for me, she could easily arrange for me to make a private Retreat at the same time, and that, in fact, a room was ready. I asked mamma about it, and she promised to take me to the Convent as soon as possible. Now, surely, during this Retreat I shall be able to make up my mind as to my future life. I must decide something soon, for, do you know, I have been asked to make the acquaintance of a highly desirable "parti," and

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my father cannot understand why I want to wait a whole month before meeting this individual, as, naturally, I need not accept him if I do not like him. Of course dear mamma knows all. She is much grieved, but she loves me too much ever to make me unhappy by opposing a *real* vocation. Papa knows nothing and guesses nothing; I know he will hate it, and I won't upset him until I am quite, quite sure of myself . . .

Unfortunately, nearly all her private papers have been destroyed by Berthe herself. One tiny leaflet, however, has been found. It is inscribed: "My Beloved Anniversaries," and after those of her birth, First Communion and Confirmation, she writes: "Became Child of Mary, June-July 1861, a time of great favours, during which Our Lord took me to Himself for ever."

The result of the Retreat was what was to be expected. Berthe was not violently enthusiastic, nor carried away by her feelings. She knew that she would have much to endure, but she faced the future with calm determination, consoling herself with the words of Holy Scripture: "Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm, for love is stronger than death."

On 20th May 1861 she writes to her friend:

Just a few lines to tell you that I have quite decided to become a nun. Though I foresee many difficulties, I am no longer miserable. Mamma is too good; she has given her consent, but papa is

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furious ; he will not discuss the matter. As to the rest of the family circle, only my brother knows. No one, except perhaps one or two far-off cousins, will approve, so why should I be in a hurry to encounter the storm of argument, dismay, etc. etc. ? My brother only found out by chance, through poor papa, and was so disturbed that he reasoned with me most seriously. He thinks that I am disappointed about some love affair ! He won't be convinced to the contrary, and I suppose many people will agree with him. Is it not too bad ?

But Berthe was quite the last person to trouble herself about the opinion of the general public. Her father's attitude was the *real* trouble. She knew well how proud and fond he was of her, and the rosy future he had hoped for her. Her mother was just as much grieved, but was sufficiently unselfish to suppress her emotions. Thus her daughter was always able to confide in her and count on her help. The following letter gives a touching picture of the way in which the poor mother, suppressing her own sorrow, did her best to help her child. It also gives some interesting details of the Retreat, which had done so much for Berthe :

21st June 1862.

The day following the close of the Retreat mamma came for me, and Mother Sophie told her of my important decision. She was terribly grieved and we wept together, but she is so good to me ; she will not try to prevent my doing what

## Vocation

I wish. She knows that I am not acting on impulse and that I quite realise what I am undertaking; in fact, she says, that she has seen for some time what was coming. On leaving the Convent we went to call on Father Bazin as mamma wished to know what *he* thought of the matter. He was very convincing and he gave some good advice as to what I had better say to my father. Poor, dear papa! He was waiting at the hotel to welcome me with open arms after my five days' absence. I felt too wretched, but I knew that I should never have an easier opportunity of breaking the news of my vocation to him, so when he began to talk about the "eligible parti" I mentioned once before to you, I just blurted out the whole truth.

For a moment he seemed stunned. As soon as he could speak he said. "Never would he consent to such a thing; he was a fool to have allowed me to put my foot in a convent—he would rather see me dead at his feet than a nun. I was an unnatural child to think of leaving all who loved me so." He absolutely broke my heart by his distress. Finally he burst into loud sobs. I had never in my life seen my father shed a tear, and I cannot describe my feelings. I could not bear it and I rushed away to my room. After a while he calmed down and said to mamma he felt sure that, with time, I might be talked out of my nonsense. She soothed him as she always does, and did not tell him all she knew of my decision. They both thought I might as well see the much-discussed young man, so the very same evening he went to

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the opera with us, and the next day we went out driving. He is quite nice, but not at all exciting. I really was not thinking of him a bit all the time, but I was most pleasant, of course, and poor, dear papa began to hope that things were improving. When I was at length obliged to say that my mind was quite made up, he declared that I was never to mention my so-called vocation again, and we started off for London, by way of change of scene. Everything was tried to distract my mind—balls, riding excursions, visits, *anything*. I never had a moment's peace and papa was so severe and cold all the time. Before we started for Ireland he asked what he should write to the young man, whether I liked him, etc. etc. Finally, as I was quite firm, he said, that of course he could not oblige me to marry *anyone*, but that he would never consent to the nun idea, and there the matter rests for the present. He has been kinder lately. Oh dear, it is dreadful to be hurting my good, dear parents so! Sometimes I feel that I am a horrid, heartless girl. Since our return from abroad I have been allowed to go to the Convent, which is rather surprising. Mother Thérèse is so comforting. I told her everything and we talked too of you. Adieu, chérie. BERTHE, ENFANT DE MARIE.

Berthe's future was practically decided. Father Bazin writes as follows to Mother Thérèse: "I think that the child has a true vocation. I do not for one moment doubt her real fitness for the religious life, and as a priest I should be very

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wrong if I did not say what I honestly believe." The candid opinion of one so well fitted to judge was somewhat reassuring to Berthe's parents, she herself, as we know, was very independent of exterior influences. Years after she told an intimate friend that Father Bazin had been very helpful. "But," she added, "even if he had been otherwise, I should never have changed my mind, I was so sure of my vocation."

In her desire to aid suffering humanity, Berthe at first had a strong attraction to the life of a Sister of Charity, as followed in the Congregation of St Vincent de Paul. Later on, as we shall see, the beauty and utility of a more Contemplative rule of life began to attract her ardent soul; but, as yet, Our Lord from His Dwelling-place in the Tabernacle had not revealed to her the desolation of His Sacred Heart, nor made known the noble apostolate of love and reparation.

The following letter bears no date, but it serves to show M. Goulet's vain endeavours to distract his daughter's attention from what he so much disliked.

I am going to write you a letter in my poor neglected English. I hope you will be able to understand me! My tactics as regards papa are not too successful. I had two offers of marriage when we were in Paris, after my visit to you at Orleans, the one from a magistrate, belonging to M——, the other from a quite

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delightful young officer. Now, papa dislikes soldiers and knows that *I* am very fond of them, so at first he only mentioned the magistrate—he has always declared, “You shall never marry an army man.” When he saw that I was anything but enthusiastic, he said, poor dear, that he had “made up his mind to allow me to accept the young officer—he supposed that I should be satisfied *now*.” Of course my determination was unaltered by this concession, and he was furious and almost reduced me to despair. His orders are that my vocation is not even to be mentioned for at least a year. It is most discouraging. It is all very well for Mother Thérèse to say that he is quite right and the time of probation will be quickly over, I am sure it will be just the same twelve months hence and that I shall have to wait till I am twenty-one. Send me a nice long letter to cheer me up a little. Put in all you forgot in the last one. BERTHE.

The following extracts from Berthe’s descriptions of her travels are good reading. We feel grateful to M. Goulet. Had he permitted his daughter to go at once to her convent, as she wished, the amusing correspondence with her friend would naturally never have been penned.

21st June 1862.

DEAREST,—My description of my Paris experiences must wait till next time. I will begin at once with London. The crossing from Calais was quick and good. No one ill and I much enjoyed it.

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I don't like London much, it is so black and smoky and foggy, not a bit like Paris. The Exhibition buildings are ugly, and would be prison-like, were it not for the beautiful glass domes at either end. They are enormous—the exhibits most interesting—the French section very brilliant, but the general effect is poor. The weather was bad, but we did not mind much, as when it rained we “did” the various great buildings—St Paul's, Westminster Abbey, Houses of Parliament, etc. etc. When it was fine, we either drove or rode out. The parks and gardens are perfectly lovely. We went to Sydenham, where they have set up the Crystal Palace, to Windsor, Kew (exquisite gardens), Hampton Court and many other places. The English landscape is so green and beautiful. We know heaps of people in London and much against my will, my father obliged me to go out a great deal. May is the height of the London season, everyone who is *anyone* is in town. I only went once to the Opera, very fine house. After a little tour in Wales we crossed to Ireland in frightfully bad weather. It took us five hours to get to Kingstown. The sea was running mountains high, splendid, I loved it. Dublin is a fine town, I prefer it to London. They compare Dublin Bay with the Bay of Naples, so you can picture the beautiful scenery. After a few days in Dublin we went to stay with friends in Tipperary. It was a perfectly lovely time. We went on the most charming excursions, all over the South of Ireland. The most interesting parts are the Lakes of Killarney and the City of Cork. The Irish Lakes are very

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romantic. They reminded me of Switzerland on a small scale, not of course majestic and magnificent, but so very green and fresh and sweet. The whole country-side is beautiful, but it is melancholy to see the wretchedness of the people. The poorer classes are frightfully neglected. They emigrate in great numbers to America and the population is rapidly decreasing. As a rule they are good Catholics, but it is said that Protestantism is gaining ground at present. I was sorry to leave Ireland, but we had such a wonderful crossing back to England—a most tremendous storm at sea. You know I am a splendid sailor, and I stayed on deck the whole time braving the elements. Never shall I forget the sight, at once terrifying and sublime—Heaven seemed to be opening above me. I was sorry to say farewell to the sea, I suppose I shall never see it again. Now, we are once more in France and going to stay for a little with my sister in the country, it will be nice and quiet. Good-bye, dearest.

BERTHE, E. DE M.

In her next letters our heroine describes a trip to the Pyrénées and incidentally we see how distressed she is at having again to disappoint her father in his pathetic endeavours to make her change her purpose.

How dear of you to answer so quickly! I thought I had told you that we were going to the Pyrénées, by way of being with papa while he does the cure at Luchon. He usually goes with us to Plombières, but *I* have always wanted to see the

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Pyrénées, so this year he decided to change his Spa in the hope of amusing me and perhaps making me think differently. Of course the idea of the trip is enchanting, but I can't bear to be always grieving my dear father. It seems cruel to be for ever contradicting him. I do believe that he would go to the ends of the earth with me, if I wished it, in fact he says he will never get tired of travelling about with me and mamma.

BAGNÈRES DE LUCHON,

*8th August 1862.*

I am sure you feel impatient, dear little friend, and call me neglectful and careless. Really and truly I have not had a moment to write, though I have constantly thought of you. We stopped a few hours at Tours and had time to visit the cathedral and two other churches and even to drive a little way along the banks of the Loire. At Bordeaux the whole day was given up to seeing churches, parks, etc. We also visited the Museum and the Picture Gallery where there are magnificent paintings by Murillo, Correggio, Rubens, Titian, etc. I liked Bordeaux very much. We reached Toulouse at ten o'clock at night. One morning was enough for this rather uninteresting town. The houses are very high and the streets are extremely narrow. At midday we left for Montré Jean and there we got the diligence which took us to Luchon. As we only arrived at eleven at night it was very uncomfortable and not till five o'clock next day did we succeed in securing a really good and spacious flat, the only thing against it, is, that

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it is on the second story. After seeing the doctors, my father began his treatment on the Wednesday and in the evening we drove to the lovely Vallée du Lys. Yesterday, Thursday, we went to Venasque in Spain. I climbed on horseback for six hours a high rock opposite la Maladetta. Mamma, who was obliged to ride too, is very tired to-day. The scenery of Venasque is magnificent. We stopped to rest when halfway there and had a wonderful view of the snowy peaks of la Maladetta and of the whole chain of the Pyrénées from Perpignan to Bayonne. Some Spanish shepherds added to the charm of the scene. They seemed cut out for the wild landscape, looking like real brigands in their sheepskin coats. Good-bye, darling.

BERTHE, E. DE M.

In the autumn of 1862 Berthe is once more at home preparing for the Novena of the Immaculate Conception.

The following letter shows the great love and confidence which she felt for the Mother of God—indeed heavenly guidance became more and more needful; sometimes the girlish, loving heart was almost irresistibly drawn towards the joys of earth.

*9th November 1862.*

DEAREST,—How glad I was to receive your letter, I am indeed a fortunate being to possess a friend like you. Mother Thérèse, too, is such a comfort, I value her every word. Indeed, I do admire those wonderful children of Mary who are

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set before us as examples, and I do my best to follow in their steps, but very feebly I fear. I am sure, however, that I should never have made any advance in virtue at all, had I not been a Child of Mary. Your ideas as to the Novena of the Immaculate Conception are splendid. I will do exactly as you do. We will be so devout, that the Blessed Mother will be bound to hear, and grant all our petitions. I shall pray hard that my dear father may be less distressed about my future; will you, dearest, join me in this? You may be very sure that I will not forget to pray that all *your* desires may be granted. Here am I, a fixture at Rheims and when I look forward to the long winter months before me, I declare I don't know of a Saint powerful enough to protect me! I shall be *forced* to go out a great deal, mamma absolutely declines to leave me at home, but she *has* promised not to give a big dance, which is something. Of course papa insists on my going in for everything. Though I am bored to extinction by a great deal of it, I am bound to say that I do like concerts and nice, cosy little parties. As to music, I adore it, indeed I really enjoy most things. My best plan would be to burn my face, like the pious young woman, who made such a fright of herself, that she had to be shut up! But I can't quite make up my mind to this drastic step!

I think I mentioned to you that young Count S—— came to Mont Dieu purposely to be introduced to me. He was not so very attractive and he has not much of a position, so, for once it was fairly easy to manage papa. But, as soon

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as we came home, one day (I am sure it had been planned) when we were having an afternoon in the country, Monseigneur joined us. He was, if you please, accompanied by a charming man—the Baron de L——. I guessed the game immediately, and did my level best to escape; all in vain. Monseigneur most politely begged me to admire the beauties of nature with the Baron, he himself being rather fatigued, would prefer to sit and chat with my parents. Mamma said she would presently come and meet us, and I, feeling half bored, half cross, set off on my prowl, with the eligible young man. He turned out to be excessively nice, very amusing and quite pious, too, he talked about religion beautifully. When mamma joined us, I was more than surprised to find how time had flown and how much I had enjoyed myself. I could not believe that it was late and that Monseigneur's carriage was waiting. I had a dreadful night. I could not help thinking about the Baron, you would have been sorry for your poor little friend! Thank God, Our Lady came to my help and showed me the reality of my vocation and how miserable I should be if I relinquished it. I was able to conquer the temptation, and next day I said to papa that he must leave me in peace for the moment, that the idea of marriage was distasteful and that surely, he himself must see how tiresome it is to be perpetually inventing excuses to these various gentlemen. He said nothing in reply, I fancy he sees I am in deadly earnest. The worst of it is, that this time I *cared*! Ah well! if Our Lady will only stand by

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me, all will end as it should. I wish I did not feel so indifferent about the Novena which begins to-morrow. All these marriage problems are very distracting. I cannot help picturing myself nicely settled in life, making everyone around me happy. Mamma would so love to have me always near her at Rheims. Can it be that I am an unnatural, undutiful daughter to persist thus in the idea of becoming a nun? Sometimes I don't know how to go on living.

Berthe's twenty-first birthday was fast approaching and it would soon be needful to speak to M. Goulet again on the subject ever present in her mind. The following letters show how she dreaded the ordeal :

*22nd May 1864.*

DEAREST,—A horrid moment is looming before me. I must get hold of papa before I am twenty-one on the 29th of next month. I mean to seize the first favourable chance, but it is by no means easy, he knows what I want and manages to be hardly ever alone with me. I quite see that he cannot be expected to agree to everything all at once, but as I have waited for so long, I think he ought to indicate some given time and I am hoping that I may be able to persuade him to do this. Pray that Our Lady may grant me courage and influence papa. No one will move in the matter unless *I* do and things will drift on, indefinitely. I still think I should like to be a Sister of Charity, but I must wait and see Mother Thérèse, and talk it over once more with her.

BERTHE.

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Just at this critical juncture a series of sermons was preached at Rheims for the Feast of St Rémi by the Rev. Father Félix. M. Goulet was very much touched by one of the discourses. He went to Confession and told the eloquent preacher of his great grief about his daughter's vocation. Father Félix was both consoling and convincing, and M. Goulet at last made up his mind to resist no longer, and declared to Berthe that, if she were of the same mind, one year hence, she should do as she wished. Her joy and thankfulness may be imagined. All the rest of her life she religiously kept sacred the Feast of St Rémi, for she attributed her father's change of attitude to the intervention of the Saint. We find the day inscribed among her dates on the leaflet previously referred to as "My dear Father's Conversion."

It was indeed a conversion. The poor father's heart was touched and softened by some mysterious, irresistible influence from above. Now one would suppose that all would be well and our heroine at peace with herself and all around her, but, alas! this was very far from being the case. Her father's heart was indeed changed, but the old enemy of mankind was more on the alert than ever. We shall see how, twice, in most determined assaults, he nearly overcame the gallant girl. But these are the last struggles, the last attempts to rob the Heavenly Bridegroom of a heart so worthy of His choice, so wonderfully fitted to be His alone.

# Vocation

*November 1864.*

When at Mont Dieu I had a very severe trial. You know that a year ago Baron de L—— wanted to marry me, and that he was told he must wait twelve months for my answer. Well, the time is up, and here he is again and more in love than ever! My brother-in-law knows him well and told him of my vocation, but he declines to give up hope. He was a week at Mont Dieu, pretending to shoot, in reality trying his best to talk me round. I really have never seen anyone so attractive. He is so refined, and belongs to such a good old family, and is *so* good and very amusing as well; I admire him immensely. He told mamma that he would like a sort of Sister of Charity wife, that he was not one bit afraid of my pious notions, and that if I married him I could do just whatever I wished with my own fortune, spend it all on the poor, if I so pleased, he would do just what I wanted. He also said that I could divide my time between Rheims, his own country place and Mont Dieu. He is delightful and *so* good looking, I feel I could be very happy with him. As this was by far and away the most tempting offer that has fallen to my lot, poor papa could not help once more hoping against hope. After the Baron's departure, he begged me to think it over well for a whole week. For the two first days I must confess I was sorely tempted. It seemed to me that I might do so much good as the wife of a man like the Baron de L——. I fancied that perhaps

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God had permitted me to dream up to now of the religious life, by way of keeping me free for a union which would benefit so many. I could not sleep, I could not see my way clearly, I did not know where to turn for help. I had begged to be left alone and I would not write to anyone, I was so afraid of being influenced. At length on the third day, after I had prayed for a long time, I suddenly felt quite calm, and all thoughts of happiness in marriage left me—instead, I felt more eager than ever before for the life of a nun.

Perhaps we shall be blamed for dwelling so long on Berthe's love affairs, but we have done so with intention. Berthe did not enter religion because she was disappointed in her affections. We have so often heard this statement made about nuns that we are determined to show that in this case, at least, it was very far from being true.

RHEIMS, *9th December* 1864.

Your letter, dearest, came the very day of our arrival at Rheims. We stayed at Coulommiers a little longer than we had originally intended. In Paris I had just time to see Mother Thérèse and discuss the Sisters of Charity as compared with the Oiseaux Community.

The dear little Mother is very eloquent about the perfection of her own Order, but we got on quite beautifully though we argued just a little! She was sweet, and promised to pray for me and said, that, if after my Novena of the Immaculate

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Conception, I still felt drawn to the Order of St Vincent de Paul, she would be convinced that it was God's Will, and not try to dissuade me from doing what I wish. I am sure you must be tired of hearing about my various lovers, but I am really quite worried about another of them ! It seems that a very nice boy, a great friend of my brother's, has been more or less devoted to me since he was about twelve (we are nearly of an age). He is dreadfully distressed at the idea of my becoming a nun. He threatened to commit suicide and begged and implored to be allowed to see me and try to make me think differently. Last Sunday I talked to him for a while and did my best to be consoling, but it was of no use, and I felt dreadfully upset. He is so nice, too, poor fellow, I treated him like a child, I feel so old ! I am told that he is really ill, all his friends are very anxious. I do wish that I could help him, but what can I do, I cannot marry him or anyone else. I can only pray for him. Well I felt I had to tell you, I have always told you everything . . .

A few weeks later Berthe writes again :

My poor little sweetheart is still very miserable, but I don't think he is going to die. I have not seen him again, he does not go out much. They say he is very dismal at home. I feel so sorry about it all and wish I could see him, but I believe he has determined never to enter our house again.

This was the last struggle ; from henceforth

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quietly, in her family circle, Berthe awaited the final Guidance from Above, which would for ever fix her earthly career.

RHEIMS, 21st March 1865.

DEAREST,—For days I have been simply burning to write to you, in vain. I am so happy, for, though I have not as yet quite gained my point, I think I have very nearly done so. You know, for months I have been trying to discuss final arrangements with papa, but my courage always failed me at the critical moment, and he, on his side, always managed to avoid being left alone with me. Last Saturday, however, I was determined not to let the day pass without at least making an attempt. The weather was lovely, I knew that mamma had visitors and could not go out, so I said that a walk would be very nice, and papa was delighted and started off with me quite happily. You may be sure that I was inwardly trembling, but after we had gone some way I took heart and began the fatal subject. To my amazement papa was most kind. He listened patiently, and, though he did not agree to my going away at once, he promised that after Easter he would definitely pronounce on the matter. Oh, how thankful I am! Pray for me and for my dear father. Later on when all is settled, I will pray for you, just now I am absorbed in my own petitions. When I am really free to go, I know I shall be wretched at leaving home, but now I will not think of the sad side of this great Joy. I must try to make the very

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most of these last months with my dear people. I am still so selfish, so vain, so fond of my own way, I will try, with God's help, to be a better girl, but it is uphill work.

A month later Berthe writes :

According to promise, dear, I send you my latest news. A most unlooked-for complication has arisen, for the moment I am taking you, and you only, into my confidence. I think you know that at Easter two Jesuit fathers stayed here with us. There are crowds of Germans at Rheims and no priest who knows the language, so these Jesuits were asked by our Parish Priest to come and preach a German Easter Retreat. He did not know where they could stay, as his house is too small for visitors, and was most grateful when we offered to put them up. They arrived on Easter Sunday. They are from the Jesuit College at Metz, and are making use of their holiday to give this Retreat.

They are quite attractive. One is young, most amusing ; the other is a good deal older and very musical, he has a lovely voice. He sang the solos at Benediction during the Retreat. It was a perfect joy to listen to him ; he is also very obliging about singing to us at home. He is much quieter than the other father, and is the real religious type, very dignified in manner, with the most piercing eyes you ever saw. I talked to him a good deal. He said he often went to the Chapel of the Oiseaux to hear the singing. This, by way of introduction. Now I must tell you how my new difficulty is

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connected with this Jesuit. I had never intended to discuss my vocation with Father Sucher, although I knew his advice would be worth considering. I began, however, to notice after a day or so that he seemed to be studying me pretty closely, as though he were trying to find out something about me ; in fact this impression became so strong that I was quite nervous and hardly dared to speak in his presence. Finally, on Friday, mamma came to me and said : “ Somehow or other Father Sucher has heard that you want to be a nun and would like to speak to you on the subject. He will be in the garden between five and six o’clock.” It was already half-past four and I felt taken by surprise and overcome, and very stupidly began to cry. So mamma said she had better say I would rather wait till another day. After a few minutes, however, though I felt sure that I should be tearful during the interview and incapable of talking sense, I said to mamma : “ It is no good putting it off, I will go now,” and after a few minutes in my room I went down quite composedly to the garden shrubbery, where the Jesuit was awaiting me. He was very kind, and I was soon quite at my ease and only too pleased to hear all that he had to say. *He* talked, *I* said next to nothing beyond answering a great many questions. At last he said he had found out all that he wanted to know, and that he could tell me of an Order which he felt sure, above all others, would satisfy my aspirations. Would I meet him next morning before Mass at half-past six and hear what he had to say ? Of course I said that I would, and we separated. At

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dinner we did not speak to each other at all. The next morning we were both punctual. This time I did not feel at all nervous. I was looking forward to the talk, and I felt sure that Father Sucher would approve of the idea of my becoming a Sister of Charity so I began at once to tell him of my wishes in this respect. He soon stopped me, however, and asked a great many more questions. Then, when I had answered everything absolutely truthfully, he asked if I had ever heard of the Society of Marie Réparatrice, which, it appears, was founded only six or seven years ago. I had not, and said so. Then he begged me most earnestly to make a Retreat in a Convent of this Order, to study the rules and regulations very closely and to make the acquaintance of the Superior-General, the Foundress. He says she is wonderfully pious and that already some miraculous cures have been attributed to her agency. She is a Belgian, very cultured and highly connected. Father Sucher is sure that this new Order is the one for me and would be grieved for me to decide on any other without at least giving Marie Réparatrice a trial. He really almost seemed inspired as he talked, and finally I agreed to do as he wished and to make the Retreat. Mamma has consented to the plan and says that it can be arranged. Father Sucher feels certain that the Hand of God is in all this; he implores me to decide on nothing hastily. But it is all very upsetting. I was hoping to become a Sister of Charity very soon and now I must still go on waiting. What will papa think of this new idea? At present no one knows except

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mamma and you. Father Sucher advises me to try and see Father Olivaint during the Retreat. He is said to be wonderful, a real Saint, in fact. Well I must just do my best. Perhaps I shall never see Father Sucher again. I shall always think gratefully of him. He did me a great deal of good and brought our dear Lord so vividly before my mind's eye. I do wish, my dearest, that I could see you ; your own

BERTHE.

RHEIMS, *Saturday, 13th May 1865.*

DEAREST,—Although your more than welcome letter came the day after we arrived at Mont Dieu, I have been obliged to put off replying to it, until now. Well, I think it most natural that you should feel as you do about my experiences with Father Sucher, but on the other hand, I have not quite fully explained the situation. Since I wrote to you, mamma has told me that it was one of my uncles who informed the Jesuit of my desire to enter the religious life. Now, this particular uncle, though he is as good as gold, excessively dislikes the idea of my becoming a nun, and he hoped to persuade Father Sucher to look at the matter from the same point of view and assist in trying to talk me out of the notion. You see, my uncle felt sure that I should be impressed by whatever Father Sucher said. *He*, however, intimated that, knowing me so slightly, he could give no opinion, but that he was very willing to question me on the subject. Then if, after the interview, there remained the least doubt in his mind of the sincerity of my vocation, he would be the last to encourage me

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to go against the wishes of all my friends. Mamma, you know, is most grieved at the prospect of my leaving her for ever; she was, therefore, only too glad when my uncle told her of the little plan. I think I said in my last letter how good and kind the Father was, and how quickly he put me at my ease. I know he soon saw that I am really very much in earnest. He did not recommend the Order of Marie Réparatrice, only he dwelt at length upon the various merits of the Oiseaux, the Sacred Heart and the Dominicans, and he said that a Retreat in some Convent where I knew no one who could influence me in any special way was absolutely necessary. I know that he personally would indicate Marie Réparatrice as the ideal resting-place for me, but he wants me to study the Order, and get to know it as well as I do the others. I have mentioned I don't think he much approves of the idea of my becoming a Sister of Charity (though you know I have always inclined to St Vincent de Paul), but, of course, I am absolutely free to do as I like, the one point is, not to be in a hurry to decide on *anything*. I think I must do as he suggests. He inspires one with confidence, he is so quiet and decided and not at all gushing. My best plan will be to make the Retreat at Marie Réparatrice, and dear mamma is trying to arrange for us to slip quietly away to Paris. We don't want everyone to know where I am going.

Father Sucher has twice written to me since he left us, entreating me to be patient and that, even, if I feel drawn towards Marie Réparatrice, to

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decide nothing, finally, until I have seen the Superior-General of the Order. She is at present in Rome, conferring with the Holy Father on the establishment of her Order. She does not return till the month of August. I believe she is a marvellous woman, almost supernaturally endowed.

In July 1865 Berthe went with her mother to Metz. Father Sucher especially wished to see her again. She thankfully availed herself of his advice at this critical moment of her life.

“I trust,” she says, “that I shall be enabled to know Our Lord’s Holy Will concerning me. Do pray for me, dear friend. It is hard to keep true to my vocation, surrounded as I am with pleasure and distractions of all kinds. It all has a very enervating effect. I want strengthening. Only yesterday we had a great to-do over the birthday of a little cousin. Fireworks in the garden—music—illuminations—it was so pretty, and in the midst of the gaiety, it suddenly came over me, that all would soon be ended for *me*, *I* should never have any more joy and pleasure, no one would care for *me*. I very nearly burst into tears on the spot. Of course it was merely a momentary weakness; to-day I am quite myself again and able to bless God and Our Lady for protecting me and deigning to show me how infinitely more blessed I shall be in following God’s Service, than if I were content to remain here with my dear friends of earth. Still, dearest, I want your prayers—I need support.”

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A few more months were yet to elapse before Berthe was able to make the longed-for Retreat, but at length among her beloved anniversaries we find it inscribed: “27th February-3rd March 1866.”

On her return to Rheims she writes thus :

DEAREST,—Before entering into any details as to my journey, I must tell you the result of the Retreat. I have decided to belong to Marie Réparatrice, and I cannot express my thankfulness at having been at last guided by Providence to an Order which seems ideal. Please don't think me hopelessly romantic! To begin at the beginning. At first it was thought that I could only have two or three days in Paris, so on our arrival, without losing a moment's time, I hurried to the Rue de Sevres, and saw our dear Mother Thérèse, who was even sweeter than usual. On leaving her, I went off to Marie Réparatrice, to call on the Superior, and on the following day my Retreat began.

After all, papa wrote to say that I might stay as long as I wished, so I was able to make a real, long Retreat. The Superior is most charming—she was more than kind and took me under her especial care. She also frequently sent other nuns to talk to me, and tell me all that I desired to know of the various aims and objects of the Society.

They conversed with interest and appreciation of other Orders as well as of their own and did not in any way try to influence me. They are

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*very* well-bred. Then they are so sweet to each other and so happy and at home with Rev. Mother, it is all like happy, family life. The rule of the Society is fairly ascetic and I liked it and felt more and more disposed to pass my days in the Convent, but I made up my mind to ask advice from *no one*.

I did not even write to Father Sucher and have only heard from him since I came home.

I went to Confession to a Jesuit father, but did not ask his opinion on the important subject. He was, however, very kind, as when the Retreat was over I wrote to tell him of my decision. I feel sure that I am doing right and that I shall never, never alter. I cannot describe my feelings after Holy Communion. All my doubts had vanished. I was so at rest—so calmly happy. Our dear Lord seemed to whisper, that here, at long last, I was in my right place, ready to do His Holy Will.

So now, darling, my destiny is for ever fixed. I wrote to Mother Thérèse yesterday. I fancy she will not be so very greatly surprised. The date of my entrance to the Novitiate is not as yet determined, as I should, if possible, like to wait till after my brother's marriage before leaving home. I must not think about the parting from my dear ones, but pray for strength. When I write next, I will tell you more of the Society of Marie Réparatrice. I know you will love it when you really know it. Dearest love from

BERTHE, E. DE M.

Doubtless Mother Thérèse was in a measure prepared for her dear pupil's final decision;

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none the less she felt the impending separation very keenly. However, in the years to come, Berthe's affection for the dear nuns of her childhood grew, rather than diminished, and, under her influence, great friendship and cordiality arose between the Societies of Marie Réparatrice and Notre Dame.

We come now to the last letter written before Berthe's departure for the Novitiate. It is short—constrained. It is evident that the poor child does not dare to dwell much on the approaching final separation from her dear ones.

RHEIMS, *October 1866.*

DEAREST,—I have just time to tell you that I am, at last, really going. To-morrow, Sunday, papa, mamma and I start for Mont Dieu. We shall be able to say good-bye more quietly there than here.

From thence, mamma and I intend going to Strasbourg—and in a few days my brother will come for her, she must not make the journey back, alone.

Oh, my dearest, my heart is almost broken at the thought of what is before me. May God help us all and give me courage to the end. Pray for me, in these last days, pray especially for dear papa, he has been so unhappy of late, I fear that, just at the last, he may make it difficult. When all is over and I can think calmly, I will not forget to pray for you.

You know, of course, that during the Novitiate,

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I shall only be allowed to write very occasionally, but *you* must write to *me*, *very* often. Tell me of all and everything. I shall often be thinking of you and praying for you. In the future, as in the past, I shall always be your most loving, faithful friend.

Good-bye, good-bye, dear heart. Some day, somewhere, I am counting on seeing you and your dear little Emmanuel. Remember me most kindly to your husband. Always your loving and devoted little friend

BERTHE, E. DE M.

### CHAPTER III.

1866-1878—NOVITIATE—PARIS—TOULOUSE—ROME  
—MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE RETURNS TO  
TOULOUSE AS SUPERIOR—DEATH OF THE FOUN-  
DRESS—MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE ELECTED  
SUPERIOR.

“SOME events are too keenly felt to be lightly discussed,” says Berthe in one of her letters, and we feel inclined to repeat this remark as we begin the difficult task of describing the long and saintly life of Mother Mary of St Maurice as a nun. We shall see as our tale unfolds that the brilliant social gifts of the young attractive girl hid most unexpected depths of energy and goodness.

On the 1st of November 1866 Berthe entered the Novitiate in the Convent at Strasbourg, which had been founded about ten years earlier and recognised canonically on the 7th of March 1857.

The Baroness d’Hooghvoorst, with Mademoiselle Thérèse Sucher (sister of the Jesuit father who had taken such a fatherly interest in Berthe’s vocation) had been most warmly welcomed to Alsace by Monseigneur Raess. The Bishop was keenly interested in the New Foundation, and had, besides, very happy memories of the Outremont household and of the delightful hospitality accorded

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him at the Castle of Wégimont when on a Mission to Belgium from the Holy See.

It was the will of Heaven that Catholic Alsace, the stage of so many bloody struggles, should be the cradle of a religious Order designed to summon around the Blessed Sacrament representatives of all nations, in one bond of love and reparation. And it was in this house, so full of the influence of the venerated Foundress, so permeated with the devotion of those who were the pioneers of the Society, that Berthe began her religious life.

The Order of Marie Réparatrice appeared ideal to the young novice. It is at once active and contemplative, and thus doubly attractive to an elevated mind already far advanced in interior grace. Then, Berthe's devotion to the Blessed Virgin made a life of prayer and work undertaken in union with Our Lady delightful. The aim of the Society is, as its title indicates, Reparation. Reparation for the souls of mankind by offering to God homage, sacrifice, expiation for the many who offend and forget Him; reparation in the souls of men, by endeavouring to give spiritual aid to those around. All acts and intentions of devotion must ascend to Our Lord through His Mother. "The idea which should sanctify our life," said the Foundress, "is this, to replace Mary near Jesus (in so far as Mary *can* be replaced) by our love, our faithful adoration during each day and at every moment. The nuns of Marie Réparatrice must

strive to do good by Retreats, Catechisms, and other good works indicated by the Society. The efforts vary from time to time, but are always intended for the good of all classes."

Mother Mary of Jesus says beautifully : " Our good deeds must ever be done silently and as it were in the shadow of the Tabernacle." Indeed the Blessed Sacrament is the centre of the life of reparation.

Berthe entered on her life of prayer, adoration, and sacrifice with a complete forgetfulness of self, which from the very first compelled the admiration of her companions. " We all loved her," writes one of her Sisters in the Novitiate, and, without knowing the reason, were impressed by her personality, though she herself was the very last to put herself forward. She charmed all by her simple manner and graceful dignity. Exact in all her duties, she was not tiresomely scrupulous, and she was always ready to efface herself and to undertake with the sweetest good nature all the little odds and ends of work that frequently fall to the lot of the novice. A good lay Sister who entered the Novitiate a few months later, used often to recall the ceremony of the clothing of our heroine on February the 5th, 1867.

On that day Berthe became Mother Mary of St Maurice, by which title we shall henceforth know her. Her mother and sister were present at the ceremony : no doubt their hearts were more

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than full. Was her father there? That, the good Sister could not recall, but she vividly remembered the charm and grace of Mother Mary of St Maurice, and how already the soothsayers of the Convent (there are always some) whispered among themselves, "This new Mother will one day surely be Superior." Our good lay Sister quite agreed with them as she watched the dainty care with which the novice fulfilled the various duties which fell to her share.

Then she was so kind and sweet to all. "At recreation," says the Sister, "she could always interest us, and she charmed us all with her simple, engaging ways."

On Sundays she generally managed to have more free time to give to household work. "Well, little Sister," she would exclaim, "give me my orders, you are mistress, you know," and when the Sister rather diffidently indicated some little duty, Mother Mary of St Maurice would at once set to work with real interest and enjoyment. She was made Sacristan in the second year of her Novitiate, and was most admirably adapted to that important position. When she had to appear in Choir she was, enveloped in her long veil, a model of religious grace and modesty. One of her most pleasing traits was her readiness to efface herself in favour of others. For example, she often received beautiful gifts from home for the Chapel. Once her mother sent a really magnificent carpet.

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It chanced to arrive on the day on which two Sisters were to be clothed, and she allowed it to be thought that the handsome offering to the Convent came from their family instead of her own. Mother Mary of St Maurice was strong and equal to a good deal of exertion ; sometimes she looked pale and tired, and the good lay Sister used to think that in all probability she was subjecting herself to some severe discipline. Mother Mary of St Maurice, however, always kept a smiling countenance ; no one ever saw her moody or depressed.

The two years' Novitiate soon passed, and, on the 7th of February 1869, the young novice, Mother Mary of St Maurice, was called to pronounce her first vows. She has left no written record of the emotions of this eventful day, but when we recall her many sacrifices and the long years of patient waiting, we may be sure that they were very sweet and holy. In later life she was often heard to say : " On entering Religion one thinks one is making a gift to God ; in reality it is He who is giving all."

Fond as she was of her own people, it was a great joy that several members of her family came to witness her Profession. For the first time, she met the wife of her brother George, and was at once much attracted by her.

Now that she was in very truth the Bride of Christ, the new nun seemed to grow in grace

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and to shed happiness and charm around her; however, she was soon to quit the house where she had been so blessed. She was almost immediately sent to Paris, and there she was made Assistant. She took up her new duties with all the exquisite tact in which she excelled. Her sweet disposition and her practical good sense soon won the hearts of her Superiors; indeed all loved her. The lay Sisters almost venerated her. They were elevated by contact with this graceful mind, which knew how to ennoble the most menial everyday tasks. Some of the older nuns were amazed at the extraordinary ascendancy over others so quickly acquired by the young Assistant. The Mother, indeed, ventured to express her surprise to a Sister who had begged Mother Mary of St Maurice to write a spiritual maxim for her. "But," answered the Sister simply, "I only ask her to do so because she does me so much good," and, opening her little note-book, she showed the newly-traced lines: "Let us try to live in Faith, Hope and Charity. Everything regarded by the light of Faith is noble. I will pray that Our Lord may increase your Faith, for by Faith we reach Hope, that sweet virtue which gives perfect consolation and which enables us to perceive Heaven. Confidence gives us Hope and Charity gives us confidence. We exist by Charity in this our exile. We must surrender ourselves entirely to the Beloved. Then we shall be really happy and our trials will be easy to bear."

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The Mother Assistant fulfilled her duties with the most careful zeal, and she also showed that example is better than precept. An eye-witness informs us that she was frequently to be found sweeping or dusting, that a tired lay Sister might rest, or in the infirmary nursing a sick postulant, and cheerfully undertaking any menial occupation. Providence ordained that her powers should be taxed to the uttermost. Several of the nuns fell ill at one and the same time, and Mother Mary of St Maurice tried to nurse them and do their work as well. Her zeal was too much for her strength, and soon after her arrival in Paris she became seriously ill with an attack of pleurisy. Her Superiors thought that the climate of the South might restore her health, which was of such value to the Society, and as the new Superior of Toulouse had begged Mother Mary of Jesus to lend her Mother Mary of St Maurice as Assistant, it was decided that she should go thither.

At Toulouse she again fulfilled her duties to the admiration of all.

In the beginning of the year 1869, soon after her arrival, Mother Mary of St Augustine, Superior of the Bourbon Mission, was sent there to recruit after a severe attack of fever. One day at recreation she said to the Mother Foundress as they watched Mother Mary of St Maurice: "Oh, Mother, do give me that nun when I return to my work a few weeks hence." The Mother

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Foundress replied quickly : “ Oh, you must not count on *her*, she is destined for something very different, choose someone else.” Everyone was surprised at the decided tone, the more so, as all knew how deeply interested Mother Mary of St Maurice had always been in Foreign Missions.

When she was called to Rome in 1871 it was a heavy blow to all the Community. We have before now referred to the sweetness of Mother Mary of St Maurice’s manner ; indeed, in their more intimate moments, the Superior of Toulouse was accustomed to call her “ My Sweet,” and she thus addresses her in her touching farewell letter :

MY LITTLE SWEET, as my parting gift, I have only a poor little picture to give you, but it is a pledge of my great and undying affection. It has a twofold memory. I gave it to my Sister Mary when I left her in June 1863 to become a nun ; now, *you* are the Sister I most love on earth, so I give it to *you*. My little Sweet, every day I will think of you and pray that Our Lord’s blessing may rest on you. We shall be together in spirit before the Crucifix, at the Altar, in the embrace of our Mother Mary ; perhaps we may also be permitted to sometimes write a few lines to each other. Life is a long “ Via Crucis.” What will be our hardest and longest Station ? We know not, but Our Lord knows, and if we suffer with Him all will be well. The Saints knew joy and peace in grief, let us pray for grace

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to follow their example. In Heaven we shall for ever rejoice together.

MARY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

*To her sweet little Sister.*

Mother Mary of St Maurice arrived in Rome on the 26th of April 1871, and on 3rd May she again assumed her duties as Assistant, in which she showed her usual kindness and firmness when there was any question of observation of the rules of the Society. She had always been devotedly attached to her native land and grieved bitterly over the misfortunes that befell fair France. Now she was to become acquainted with the sorrows of the Holy See. Her eager mind was ever alert to enlarge its point of view.

Far from confining her prayers to her own immediate circle, she loved to remember before the Blessed Sacrament the interests of the Church, of Rome, of France. She was for nearly three years in Italy, and we find her writing to the faithful correspondent of her girlish days as follows :

You would be surprised, my dear little friend, to see how interested, cloistered nun though I be, I am in passing events. Italian papers which are lent to our Mother Superior keep us informed as to all that goes on in our dear native land—in times like these we must be “au courant” with what is happening in the world. Oh! how fervently we pray for our beloved unhappy France.

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May our petitions be granted ! How greatly I admire the character of Henri V. Alas ! we are not worthy of such a ruler. Here, as elsewhere, the impious fear him ; the Faithful, on the contrary, hail him as a deliverer. Ah, if only he might be our King, the Church and France would be restored. Last week I had the joy of being received by the Holy Father. I went with the Mother Superior and two other nuns. It was a great privilege to see Pius IX, to receive his blessing, to hear him speak, and to be permitted to kiss his feet and his hands. He was so good and kind. How I wish that you could come to Rome to receive his blessing. In these sad times it is all the more touching and impressive. I suppose you have heard that all the poor Jesuits have been dispersed, and the Gesù and the other five fine churches they had in Rome have been seized. The furniture of their various houses has just been sold. It seems that Jews, alone, appeared as purchasers. The writing-table which belonged to the Father General, which his predecessor and other Generals had used, and which was prized by the Society as a sort of relic, went for three francs ! And they talk of the luxurious installation of the Jesuits ! Happily the rooms of St Ignatius and the other Jesuit Saints are respected for the moment, at least. Those of St Louis of Gonzaga and the blessed Jean Berchmans owe their preservation to the fact that they are in the Roman College over the Observatory, and all that part of the building has been left to Father Secchi.

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He is the most gifted astronomer of our day, and the Romans find it impossible to dispense with his services.

No Jesuit may say Mass or hear Confessions in any one of the churches which belong to the Society.

All this is a terrible blow to us. Still, sometimes we may manage to have some conferences, for some of the fathers have found shelter in Rome, either in French establishments or in their own families.

We, Réparatrice nuns, have a sacred duty at present. Fortunately we are allowed to continue the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and to live our ordinary life. As strangers, they leave us alone.

Mother Mary of St Maurice's stay in Rome was, on the whole, a very precious and consoling experience. She had several audiences of Pius IX, and with Mother Mary of Jesus she had the honour and happiness of assisting at the Holy Father's private Mass in the Sistine Chapel. Shortly after this the Community Retreat, given by Father Anderledy, the future General of the Society of Jesus, began. This Retreat, abounding in graces, was one of the eventful episodes of Mother Mary of St Maurice's life, but *the* Retreat which surpassed all others for her was the one lasting thirty days in January 1874. At its close, on 2nd February, she made her final vows.

Mgr. de Reyneval, Superior of St Louis des

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Français, presided at the ceremony and preached the sermon.

We can imagine the fervour with which Mother Mary of St Maurice gave herself, absolutely, to the beloved Society, which she was to serve so untiringly for the remainder of her life.

Her father and mother were present on this great occasion. When it was over, they made a little tour in Italy, and when they returned to Rome to bid, as they thought, a last farewell to their dear daughter, they found that the motherly Foundress had a happy surprise in store for them.

Mother Mary of St Maurice was to return at once to Toulouse as Superior, and they were asked to travel with her to her destination.

In the Toulouse Community Mother Mary of St Maurice was very fondly remembered, and her appointment as Superior on 29th June 1874 gave general satisfaction. She more than justified the confidence so early bestowed on her by Mother Mary of Jesus. She governed by force of example, knowing that to maintain the rule worthily, she herself must be the model. "What peace and joy," says an old Sister, "were there." The Mother Superior seemed to be everywhere without, however, losing her dignity in the slightest degree. She made all around her happy and was always loyal and true and generous. Of course sometimes

silent example did not meet the case and she was forced to speak about some little matter or another, but her motherly kindness and charming manner made it impossible to feel hurt or offended. She possessed, in a high degree, that tact which St Thomas declares to be so necessary a gift in those who are called to command others, and which knows how to be patient and to be guided by circumstances.

The quick eye of the Mother Foundress had speedily discerned the sagacity of the young religious. "Mother Mary of St Maurice lifted the heavy burden of the Toulouse Community as though it were but a feather's weight," she was once heard to remark. The new Superior came in for her fair share of trials.

In August two of her spiritual children died. One, Sister Mary of St Alphonse, had come from Rome. She became suddenly and severely ill and suffered greatly. For the first time, Mother Mary of St Maurice had to fulfil the rôle of compassionate mother. She rose to the occasion with admirable strength of mind, and with tender care comforted and sustained the dying nun to the last.

The following year, 1875, saw a great commotion at Toulouse. An unusual thaw of snow and ice in the Pyrénées resulted in an overflow of the Garonne. The peaceful river suddenly became a raging sea, and the Faubourg St Cyprian, with its

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30,000 inhabitants, was submerged. The scene was terrific, and all through the night resounded the crash of the falling buildings and the cries of the victims.

The Convent of Marie Réparatrice, being on the right side of the river, just escaped, and the Mother Superior was thus enabled to offer a shelter to the Congregation of the Holy Virgin and to the scholars of the Dames de la Sagesse, whose houses were flooded.

In the autumn of the same year the Toulouse Foundation narrowly escaped destruction by fire. On the night of 1st October the tocsin roused the Community. The nuns dressed themselves hurriedly by the glare of the flames which seemed to be all around them. The danger was imminent, but once again, Providence intervened, and only a few outlying sheds were destroyed. Mother Mary of St Maurice never lost her head in danger; she was ever calm and collected. We quote in proof of this a few lines from a letter which she received from Mother Mary of Jesus in March 1876. "So many thanks for your dear letter. It shows me that you belong entirely to Our Lord, and that your heart is filled with love of Him."

Two years later, on the 22nd of February 1878, the Society of Marie Réparatrice was suddenly plunged into sorrow and dismay.

The venerated Foundress, who for twenty-three years had been the Mother and the mainstay of the

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Order, passed for ever from this world and left her family on earth, to receive her reward in Heaven. There several of her children, among others her own two dearly loved daughters, awaited her. In all the houses of the Society solemn services were held for the repose of the soul of the beloved Mother Foundress.

All her children felt that her spirit would still watch over and guard her daughters in Christ.

At Toulouse the Archbishop gave public testimony of his esteem for the Departed. He said Mass and gave the Absolution in the presence of a great number of priests. When the last tributes of respect had been paid, a Meeting of the Superiors of the Society was called at Toulouse by the Mother Vicar to elect, without delay, from among their number a new Mother, capable of carrying on the prosperous and flourishing Society founded by Mother Mary of Jesus. There were twenty-seven Mother Capitulantes, and Mother Mary of St Maurice was one of the youngest. As Superior of Toulouse it fell to her to organise all the details of the important Chapter, and it is still on record how she herself (little thinking what was to happen) arranged all the details in the room set apart for the future Superior - General. The Venerable Father Gimhac came to assist the Superiors in their solemn decision. The mere presence of this holy priest was a happy augury for the future. Deeply imbued with the spirit of the Society, and

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having a special gift of imparting that same spirit to its members, the father came opportunely at this solemn moment to aid by his counsels and prayers the Superiors, called to make their momentous choice. On the evening of the 31st of May he began the Spiritual Exercises before the opening of the Chapter Retreat. At its close, on 1st June 1878, Mgr. Desprez, Archbishop of Toulouse, Delegate of the Holy See, said Mass and presided at the election of the Mother General. His satisfaction was very apparent when Mother Mary of St Maurice, having received the greatest number of votes, was proposed as Head of the Society.

Several of the Mothers now, for the first time, remembered that the Mother Foundress had declared that Mother Mary of St Maurice was destined to succeed her. One little difficulty arose. The new Superior-General was twenty-eight days short of the age of thirty-five years required by the Constitution of the Society in the Head of the Order.

The Bishop at once directed that the Mother Vicar should continue her office until the Holy See should grant the necessary dispensation. Mother Mary of St Maurice was almost overpowered at the totally unexpected turn of events. She took refuge in prayer in the Chapel before the Blessed Sacrament and came forth strengthened and prepared to accept with humble resignation the heavy cross which her Divine Master was pleased to lay

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upon her. On 10th June the Delegate of the Holy See received the dispensation and arrived at the Convent to confirm the election of Mother Mary of St Maurice as Superior-General, conferring on her the ring of Office and the benediction of the Sovereign Pontiff Leo XIII.

## CHAPTER IV.

CHARACTER OF MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE—HER  
RELATIONS WITH HER SPIRITUAL CHILDREN—  
PILGRIMAGES TO MANRESA AND LOYOLA.

WE have seen how Mother Mary of St Maurice had received before the Blessed Sacrament sufficient strength with which to undertake the heavy task laid on her by God. We shall now see how giving herself entirely into God's hands, she fulfilled her task in the state of life to which Providence had been pleased to call her. At the death of the venerated Foundress, her Society was already solidly established and provided with all the essentials for the success of a Religious Order. Her earthly work was done: to her successor fell the task of developing and enlarging what was already so admirable. Mother Mary of St Maurice proved more than equal to her heavy task. She placed herself under Divine Protection, and was thus enabled to fulfil her manifold and arduous duties.

Before beginning to describe the thirty-five years she passed as Mother General, let us for a moment consider her character. If we really know her we shall better understand and appreciate her great work for God. On first acquaintance all

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were impressed by her beauty, her charming manners, her smile, her sweet voice. Soon it became evident that the graceful exterior covered moral virtue of infinite greater worth. She was extremely intelligent, very quick and penetrating in her views of persons and events, and was generally very correct in her judgments. Sometimes, in common with other great minds, she was inclined to think that all had her own high ideals, but these instances were very few and far between, and the misapprehension never lasted for long. She was of a calm, reflective mind, and singularly free from the silly little feminine weaknesses, which would, if encouraged, soon be fatal to Community life.

Mother Mary of St Maurice had the happiest influence on all around her. She was dearly loved by her spiritual children. At her death, letters were received from all sides, full of expressions of esteem and veneration. Despite her determined will, she gained all hearts by her kindness, her simplicity, and her extreme loyalty. She possessed many of the virtues which go to make a Saint, and it may be truthfully said of her, that she was a woman in a thousand, and a *perfect* religious. She was marvellously enabled to overcome many apparently overpowering obstacles ; indeed, it was a saying, that “the Mother General does not waste time in unravelling difficulties, she sails over them.” With her daughters she was the perfect Mother, knowing how to make each and all feel as though

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especially beloved. She seemed to understand every individual soul; often a word, a glance, was enough to break down reserve and restraint and restore happiness. "When I think of our Mother," says one, "I am reminded of a saying which Our Lord Himself addressed to Saint Gregory of Nazianzen, and which was applied by the nuns of the Sacred Heart to *their* venerated Foundress. 'Feed My sheep, and may thine eyes be ever fixed on Me. I will give thee a heart as vast as the ocean to hold them, as sweet as honey to attract them, as strong as a diamond to control them, as tender as that of a Mother to love them.'"

It must not be imagined that Mother Mary of St Maurice attained to her high degree of virtue without many a struggle and effort. She was, in the first instance, timid and retiring and much inclined to efface herself; then, for long, she fought against her naturally hasty, impulsive temperament. Especially at the beginning of her life as Mother General, the delicate state of her health, joined to her multitudinous duties, might easily have increased this natural hastiness and impatience. She, however, being perfectly aware of this tendency, never allowed herself to make a really important decision on her own initiative, and managed so well, that only one or two among her immediate entourage ever suspected the truth.

She lived for God and her Society. As Mother

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General she gave herself entirely to her spiritual children and had no personal aims and ambitions. Under her bright exterior lay concealed a very intimate personal union with the Unseen. One day in her presence someone was discussing a mode of prayer which was not ordinary. Mother Mary of St Maurice remarked innocently, not in the least perceiving that she was giving herself away: "But that happens quite often, it is not at all surprising, I have often felt so myself."

Her saintly spirituality no doubt explains the ease with which she knew how to order her manifold duties and to be always ready for all emergencies. It was wonderful, as she visited the various houses of the Society, to see how she was equal to all and everything. Frequently she renewed courage and confirmed vocations; sometimes her sweet smile alone sufficed to uplift some despondent soul.

Before beginning to describe the development of the Society under her guiding hand, let us just glance at her as she fulfils the duty which lay ever nearest to her heart, namely, that of directing or cherishing the souls committed to her care. Her children's testimonies form a kind of pæan of gratitude and praise.

"During my Novitiate," says one, "I had heard such a glowing account of Our Mother General that I felt sure that it was exaggerated and

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prepared to be disappointed. Afterwards, when I knew more, I found it was all true."

It is most unusual to be both physically and morally endowed as she was. She breathed around her an atmosphere of sanctity; the mere sight of her was an inspiration. Her motherly kindness, which never became sentimental, her exquisite religious tact, her charming simplicity, detracted not at all from the dignified authority which she evinced even in the most minute details. Sometimes extremely capable persons are inclined to be overbearing; this she never was. She was firm and kind, always just—if anything, inclined to be indulgent. Once I complained to her about some little trivial matters in Community life, which worried me considerably. I can still hear the surprised tone in which she exclaimed: "But the poor dear things, they think they are doing it all so nicely."

It was a tacit reproof on my lack of charity, and it did me a great deal of good. It was most edifying to watch her as she prayed for Divine guidance, even in the most trivial matters. One felt so safe with her, so sure that she knew well how to please Our Lord.

"After God," writes another nun, "I certainly owe my perfect happiness in my religious life to Mother Mary of St Maurice. My health and lack of courage in supporting the trials of the Novitiate, joined to my father's entreaties and the advice of

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my director, all seemed to indicate that I ought to return to the world, though I had left it joyfully after seven years of long, painful waiting. The date of my profession had passed, and I knew well that the Authorities were very doubtful about my state of mind. The Mother General interfered and decided, in her great goodness, to receive my vows herself. She alone, though she was at a distance, had the sure intuition that this step was right, and my ever-increasing joy in my vocation is the proof that she was not deceived, and was, on this occasion, the instrument of Divine Grace." The Mother General, in spite of her engrossing labours, found time to write long and helpful letters to her children. We give one addressed to a simple little novice, who was troubled in her mind :

DEAREST CHILD,—Since receiving your letter I have constantly prayed Our Lord to grant you peace, light and strength. Why did you not tell me sooner of your struggles and distress? I think we shall soon find a remedy. You have shut yourself up too much and have not known how to resist the temptations of the Evil One. I cannot believe, dear child, that you are unsuited to the Religious Life. Your desire of perfection, the generosity with which you gave yourself up, your attitude on your arrival here, all bore the Seal of Heaven. The Evil One had nothing to gain in urging you upwards, in causing you to embrace a life of mortification and sacrifice, but it is very evident that he would score now, if he can prevail on you

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to become a backslider. Dear child, do not listen to his wiles. Would you actually quit the Infinite for the Finite, and renounce the sure and certain joys that await you in Heaven to pursue vain shadows of earthly happiness? No, no, I can't believe it of you. Reflect, seriously, dear child, on the probable causes of your want of peace since your Clothing, of your despairing attitude of mind and general weakness.

Perhaps it is merely a form of trial; perhaps, again you, thinking you have given up all, have not actually given up *yourself*, you have not sufficiently confided in Our Lord, who alone can give you strength and courage. You have, I feel sure, trusted to yourself and have not sufficiently prayed for grace. My child, what are we, poor mortals, nothing, absolutely nothing. Perhaps this trial is sent to convince you of this; if so, all will be well and you must praise and thank the Lord. I beseech you, my child, by the love I bear you, to throw yourself humbly and simply on the Heart of Jesus. Do not be hard and unresponsive, but pliant and submissive. Let Him work His Holy Will in you. You must realise that you are nothing and can do nothing by yourself. He who loves you can do all, then your whole nature will be changed, your heart will be filled with peace and joy. I am eager, dear child, to help you in every way. In the first instance, I will pray fervently for you, and I will have many prayers (without disclosing your identity) said for your intention. Write to me soon again, fully and freely. Don't fear me, you are writing to a Mother who loves

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you dearly, and who is praying for your welfare. Have courage and pray, I am counting on you and on Our Lord. Be true! I bless you with my whole heart, and am your loving and devoted

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*Superior-General, S.M.R.*

One last example to show how Mother Mary of St Maurice valued the grace of religious vocation, and how, even at the price of great trials, she tried to persuade her daughters to remain faithful to their high calling. A novice had received what might almost be termed a pagan upbringing, because her parents detected in their child a leaning towards the life of the cloister. By the interposition of Providence the girl in growing up kept to her first ideas, and on attaining her majority was determined to embrace the religious life. When she left her home for the Convent, her father bade her farewell with the words: "We have so fostered your naturally proud and independent spirit that you will find it impossible to remain in the Convent. You are in a state of religious excitement just now, but you will soon cast off the yoke you are imposing on yourself." "And," added the nun, "I am bound to say that there was reason in what my father said. I cannot attempt to describe the struggles and sufferings I endured. I had been a novice for six months when, in 1881, I saw our beloved Mother for the

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first time. In our very first interview I was able to tell her everything. She understood all at once, and was never weary of helping me in my fight against my own nature and my family. I was the only daughter, and all my people were most anxious for me to return to my home. I was ill and of no use whatever, but our Mother took me away with her to S——. In her kindness of heart she never even mentioned the annoyances to which she was subjected by my family after our departure. I said one day : ‘ I am sure, Mother, that you are putting up with a great deal on my account.’ But she only smiled and kissed me and changed the subject.”

We have now given sufficient proof of the happy relations of Mother Mary of St Maurice and her daughters. It must always be borne in mind that, in spite of her tender interest in individuals, her *great* object in life was the welfare of her Society. She was ever ready to sacrifice herself in this respect and she expected those around her to do likewise. She greatly loved really generous, obedient souls. To one such, who had been sent on a Mission where trials and difficulties abounded, she wrote : “ Have courage and confidence. Our Lord has need of devoted followers to suffer with and for Him in the work of reparation and the saving of souls. We are planting our Society in a foreign land and some of its most faithful members must of necessity suffer. They ensure God’s blessing for the present and the future. Keep a

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high courage and be at peace and desire nothing but the Will of Heaven.”

Mother Mary of St Maurice acted up to her ideals during the long years of her life as Superior-General. As soon as her charge had been ratified by the Holy See, she was called to preside at a Chapter at which several important matters were to be under discussion. The Chapter opened on 4th July. On the 14th of June she wrote the following letter to the various houses of the Society :

BELOVED CHILDREN,—The Peace of Jesus,—God our Lord, whose designs are incomprehensible and His ways past finding out, has, in spite of my unworthiness, chosen me, His most humble servant, to continue the great work of our Mother Foundress. I hasten therefore to salute you, to embrace you all, in the love of Christ, and to assure you that my heart and life will be devoted to you and to our beloved little Society which our venerated Mother founded with so many labours, trials and sufferings. I will endeavour ever to act as our dear Mother would wish. I know well that, although I follow her, I can never replace her, but her mind, her high ideals, her deep piety, will be my examples. She, from her place in Heaven, will continue to govern and guide her children. I find strength and comfort in this thought. I am keenly aware of the importance of the Mission God wills me to undertake and the weight of the burden laid on my feeble shoulders. I should be overpowered by the sense of my incompetence did I not put my trust entirely in the Master Who has chosen His

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feeble servant to bear witness to His Power and Glory. Full of fervent faith in Him will I walk boldly and firmly in the path laid out for me. The Society, dear children, aided by your help, your prayers, your devotion, will fulfil the designs of Heaven and accomplish the wishes of our venerated Foundress. We will all with one heart and mind endeavour to be Mary for Jesus. Let us constantly follow Our Lady's example in our Mission to her Divine Son, remembering that humility is the root of all perfection and the foundation of our Society. Beloved children, I can offer you no better maxim than the one contained in our venerated Mother's letter. Read it, meditate upon it, make it your rule of life. Our Mother bequeaths to us, a most precious legacy, namely, her deep affection for the Society of Jesus. Let us ever respect this heritage, which will be a source of strength and protection. It is a sacred duty not to be forgetful of the debt of gratitude we owe to that Society and to act in our relations to it as affectionate and obedient children. In bidding you farewell, I repeat how much I love you in Our Lord. In me, you will always find a Mother to receive you, to encourage and sustain you, to assist you and, in short, with the aid of Divine Grace, to help you to become true Sisters of Reparation. May the tender heart of Our Divine Lord shed on you, through His Mother, great and boundless blessings.—Your devoted

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Before leaving Toulouse, the Mother General was naturally anxious to give a few days to the dear Community, where all the members, proud though they were at seeing their beloved Mother called to be Head and Chief of the Society, were yet cast down by sorrow at the thought of the approaching separation. At last the moment of departure came, and Mother Mary of St Maurice accompanied by her secretary, who from henceforth became her inseparable companion as well as her most devoted daughter, left for Pau. Here she was accorded a warm welcome, but she only remained three days. She was due at Nantes on 16th July to assist at the Consecration of a very fine chapel dedicated to the Sacred Heart. Mgr. Le Coq presided at the ceremony and all passed off in a highly satisfactory manner. On the 23rd August she arrived at Le Mans. Here, at first, despite the respectful attitude of the Superior, a cloud was cast over each and all by the cold, reserved attitude of two of the older nuns. Mother Mary of St Maurice, however, contrived to disperse the gloom. By her graceful tact, her humility and her unfeigned admiration for the venerated Foundress, she charmed everyone, and soon those who had been disposed to look on her askance were the most affectionate and eager on her behalf.

Paris was the next stopping-place, and here the Mother General bade farewell on 5th September

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to three Mothers who were starting for the Indian Mission.

Then began the Visitation of the Belgian Communities and in the autumn she left for Italy. In passing through Florence she went to Fiesole and visited the very Rev. Father Beckx, General of the Company of Jesus. He, with Father Rubillon, received her with extreme pleasure. Finally, on 14th October she arrived in Rome, where the Community hardly knew how to express their delight on seeing her. It was indeed a Gala Day when the much-regretted Assistant of a few years before returned as Superior-General.

The Roman Community was located in those days in the Via degli Artisti. On the 28th October Cardinal Monaco la Valetta, Vicar-General of His Holiness, came to say Mass in the little chapel, and a few days later the Mother General, with her Assistants, had the honour of being received in audience by the Holy Father.

The Pope was most gracious and spoke at length of his esteem for the late Foundress, whom he had known intimately, and of his interest in her Society.

A few days later, when the Community Retreat was about to begin, the Pope sent his blessing by Mgr. Persico, who, as he conferred the proof of the Holy Father's goodwill, repeated with unction what His Holiness had said: "This Society is doing good and will distinguish itself in the future. In

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the late Foundress the nuns have lost a good woman and a true Saint."

Two months later the Mother General, with several of her daughters, had the privilege of assisting at the Pope's Mass and of receiving Holy Communion from his hands. At the conclusion of the ceremony Leo XIII received the nuns in an adjoining apartment, gave them his fatherly blessing, and once more talked for some time about Mother Mary of Jesus. Indeed, he seemed to enjoy talking of her. "I knew your Foundress very well," said His Holiness, "first, in Belgium, in Society, where she was a great power for good; later on, in Rome, where she was in the Community of St Isidoro.<sup>1</sup> I was anxious to know her reasons for founding her Congregation. She hesitated. So then I said: 'There is no harm in my knowing, I am a bishop.' Then she told me everything, and I felt sure that she was inspired by God. Your Foundress was in very truth a Saint, one of the elect." The Pope went on to exhort the nuns to strive for their own perfection and the sanctification of those around them. Blessings from above would be showered upon their Society, which was already "so beautiful and so wonderfully in evidence." The Holy Father laid his hand upon the Mother General's head and continued: "The Church loves, approves, and

<sup>1</sup> The Convent in the Via degli Artisti was opposite the Church of San Isidoro.

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appreciates your Society; it must increase and prosper for the good of souls." The Pope imparted blessings for all the houses of the Society and each individual member, and said finally to the Mother General: "Write to them that you have seen the Pope, that you have received Communion from his hands, and that he sends you his blessing."

As may be imagined, Mother Mary of St Maurice was only too glad to send to all her daughters a detailed account of this most memorable and happy interview.

More than a year had now elapsed since the death of Mother Mary of Jesus, and there still remained the last pious duty to be paid to her memory. On 5th March 1879, her body was removed from its temporary resting-place to the Mortuary Chapel in the cemetery of San Lorenzo, which the Barons d'Hooghvoorst had built. At the touching ceremony were present the new Mother General, her Assistants, and several of the Sisters of the Roman Community bearing lighted tapers. The outer shell of the coffin had been removed and through the sheet of glass which covered them the well-known features of the Mother Foundress were visible. At the close of the proceedings the precious remains were finally sealed and deposited in their resting-place in the Chapel. Many come and pray there, and are inspired to follow the beloved dead in the ways of mortification and self-sacrifice.

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The time was now approaching for recommencing the Visitation of the various Communities. Before beginning her arduous task the Mother General resolved to visit Loretto. She was eager to pray in the house which had been sanctified by the presence of the Incarnate Word. She and her Secretary arrived there on 16th June. They heard Mass next day in the Santa Casa, and were loath to tear themselves away from the little sanctuary. The Mother General writes: "It is a wonderful pilgrimage, and I was filled with overpowering emotion in that little house. It was one of the happiest days of my life. How easy to pray there, surrounded by those walls, silent witnesses of the hidden lives of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The very stones seem to speak. We prayed fervently for the Church, for France, the Society, the Company of Jesus, for each and all. I lighted two candles and had Mass said in the Santa Casa for our dear little Society, to which I am entirely devoted, and which I have offered to the Sacred Heart through the heart of Our Lady."

The Mother General then began her progress through France, Belgium, England and Spain.

Everywhere she left an impression of peace and calm. Her presence gave universal joy. She was ever a Mother ready to give pleasure and do good. One or two little incidents will give an idea of her charming ways with her children.

One day a nun was very busy picking up

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apples, which had been blown down by the wind, and suddenly perceived that she was not alone, but that the Mother General was helping her. "Am I picking up the right ones?" asked Mother Mary of St Maurice, and declared that she would come back next day and help again.

Another day she had gone to the Chapel, during the recreation, to pray. She saw at once that the Sacristan was at work single-handed, and wanted to know the reason. "Mother," replied the nun, "my assistant is ill, and there was no one to replace her." "Well, my child," said the Mother General, "go up on the Altar, I will hand you the things; we shall soon have finished and you will be able to enjoy your recreation."

We trust that these incidents will not lead the reader to imagine that the Mother General was blindly indulgent. On the contrary, she was not one to shrink from a disagreeable duty, and on occasion could, if necessary, manifest her displeasure very decidedly. "Her reproofs were very cutting," says one of her nuns. "After the lapse of thirty-two years I remember, as though it had happened to-day, the only time on which she found it necessary to find fault with me."

She was always anxious to engender the spirit of poverty. One of her favourite sayings was: "Be orderly, use every moment of time, act according to the rules of charity and poverty." Her personal belongings were of the simplest

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description, and her linen was darned and re-darned.

We find her writing to the Superior of a Community as follows : “ Accustom the novices, all the nuns, indeed, to the spirit of sacrifice and forgetfulness of self, for if they fail in this respect, they will merely be *good women*, not true Spouses of Christ. Do not fear to impress on those around you that a religious must not only love virtue, but must be prepared to suffer all things and to be truly poor in spirit. So many suffering souls are to be met ! Let us try to help them. Let us think of the wishes of our Mother Foundress. Above all, let us meditate upon the wounded Heart of Our Divine Lord and do not let us disappoint Him.”

To a homesick nun, abroad, she writes : “ Does not the East as well as the West require our presence ? Our Lord is there with work for us to do, as well as here ; courage, confidence, you must overcome difficulties, carry your cross, often be wounded to the heart, if you would follow in the footsteps of Jesus.”

Mother Mary of St Maurice’s extreme kindness of heart must be mentioned. She had the greatest sympathy for those who, coming from a foreign country, felt shy. For example, she writes as follows : “ Two nuns are coming from Spain. Be sure to receive them most kindly, giving them every possible attention. It is always rather miserable at first in a strange place, so you must make

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them feel very much at home, and tell them, on their arrival, that I send them my special blessing.”

In trials and sorrows of every description she was always full of motherly compassion; often those outside the Convent walls were touched by her delicate sympathy. We have already seen how skilfully she handled troubled souls. “One would have had a heart of stone to resist such sweetness,” says a member of her devoted flock.

To the sick she was most kind and attentive. On one occasion a consultation was held about a nun as to whose state of health opinions differed. “When in doubt,” said Mother Mary of St Maurice, “always err on the side of over-indulgence.” Her first care, on her various Visitations, was to ask after the sick nuns who were not able to leave their cells. “It is so wretched to be ill!” she would exclaim, and whatever the hour of her arrival, even in her latter years, when age and weakness made exertion very difficult, she would mount the stairs as soon as possible, see at one glance, on entering the room, that the invalid had all that was necessary, and be cheering and comforting and charming.

Nothing could exceed her anxiety for the existence of the Spirit of Harmony. “Try,” she said one day, “to be as it were the fragrance of the Divine Will in kindness and gentleness to others. Even, if *you* are suffering, try to make those round you happy. Nothing in the world is so necessary

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to Religious Life as Charity." Once, when speaking of the foundation of a new Community which lay very near her heart, she observed : " If, however, there are to be misunderstandings about this house, I had far rather that it should never exist."

One of her delightful traits was her kindness to animals. She never could bear to see them ill-used or hurt. Once, she broke off an important discussion to collect the scattered brood of an agitated hen ; another day, she sent down to beg someone to set free a little bird caught in a net beneath her window. She was delighted to see the bird singing on the branch as soon as it was released, and declared that it was thanking her for her efforts on its behalf.

The 21st of October 1879 saw the Mother General in Spain. This was the last of her Visitations for the year. It may here be said, that every year they increased in number. In Seville the comfort of her presence was greatly appreciated, as all the nuns were profoundly cast down by the recent departure of their Superior, owing to ill-health. Mother Mary of St Maurice was delighted both with the warm reception and the pretty house. Its "patios" filled with rich greenery, the long, quaint galleries all showing to such advantage under the clear, beautiful sky, were very charming, and she was only too pleased to remain in her Andalusian household until the 17th of November.

By this time, Cardinal Lluch, Archbishop of

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Seville, who was much interested in the Society of Marie Réparatrice, was begging her to take Barcelona on her return journey and to consider the idea of founding a new Community there.

The Mother General's intention had been to conclude her Spanish visit with the pilgrimage to Loyola, and at first she did not quite see her way to altering her plans. However, when it was pointed out that, by going to Barcelona, she would be able to visit Manresa as well as Loyola, she decided to start and, after a day in Madrid, she and her Secretary wended their way towards Manresa.

A variety of unexpected and picturesque incidents befell the travellers, the first of these being an unlooked-for stop at Saragossa. Thus they were able to visit the celebrated shrine of Our Lady del Pilar. The piety of the inhabitants was most edifying. "What faith is in Spain," writes the Mother General, "it is more like being with fervent religious than in the world." Next day, after early Mass, the two Mothers started again for Manresa, which place they reached on 21st November. The weather was dreadful. As they were absolute strangers, knowing nothing of their whereabouts, they had to trust entirely to the guides. Mother Mary of St Maurice asked for a carriage which would take them to the inn of San Domingo, to which they had been recommended. After a long discussion the nuns got into a "tartana," which is a kind of wagon covered with yellow canvas.

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Their route lay along the river and near at hand was to be perceived a wooden bridge, but it hardly seemed likely that this was the sole approach to the city. They went on and on, and the nuns began to feel nervous ; however, they were surprised and relieved to find that at a convenient spot their equipage crossed at a ford, and finally they reached San Domingo and were sure of a shelter for the night. They asked at once to be taken to visit the Jesuit fathers, but they did not specify to which house, and, as it happened, they were conducted to the school just as the 150 scholars were enjoying a specially noisy recreation. However, the Rev. Fr. Lasquibar received them most kindly, and after a short visit to the Church, he led them to the Chapel of the Rapt. This is a very ancient spot ; it was in former days the Chapel of Saint Lucy's Hospital. Here St Ignatius beheld the great vision of the Company of Jesus, while lying for days motionless on the ground in ecstasy. They were able to venerate the spot on which the Saint had rested, and they gazed on the stone which he usually mounted to instruct the children in their catechism. On their return to the inn a man who could speak a little French was quite surprised at their temerity. "Only French women," he remarked, "would dare to travel alone in this neighbourhood at such a time of the year and without speaking a word of the language."

Very early next morning, accompanied by a

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chance guide, and bearing a lantern, they went to the Church which enshrines the "Santa Cueva." After Mass they asked for the Rev. Father Superior. They had a letter of introduction, but he said, "Your name, Mother, is more than sufficient; never will the fathers of this province forget what the Réparatrice nuns did for them at Toulouse." Father Costa had been one of those who took refuge in France during the East Spanish persecution.

On leaving Manresa the Mother General and her companion went to Barcelona. Their first visit was to the Rev. Father Goberna of the Company of Jesus, who well knew their house at Toulouse, and was very anxious to see the Society established at Barcelona. He was most encouraging, and begged them to send two nuns as soon as possible to prepare the ways of the future Foundation. After a happy day, which seemed moreover full of hope for the future, the nuns started for Loyola.

They had a long wait at Alsasua, where the station was *en fête* for the arrival of the Archduchess Marie Christine of Austria, the future Queen of Spain.

One of the priests of the Escorial was also going on a pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of St Ignatius.

He reached Zumaraga at the same time as the two nuns. Here they had to take an omnibus

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for Loyola. The weather was very bad and stormy, and at first the good father seemed much inclined to relinquish the expedition. Finally, however, seeing the two women so determined to proceed, he also plucked up courage and got into the conveyance. At eight in the evening the pilgrims arrived at the inn which stands opposite the house belonging to the Jesuits of Loyola.

Next day the Mother General had the long-wished-for honour of communicating in the Chapel, which is the room formerly occupied by St Ignatius on his return from Pampeluna, and where a relic of the Saint is preserved.

Mother Mary of St Maurice thought of her Mother Foundress who also had passed by this blessed place, and she prayed fervently for grace to follow in her steps.

The two Mothers gazed with joy and veneration on all the precious objects contained in this Sanctuary, so dear to the hearts of the members of the Company of Jesus. They also went to the Church at Aspeizia, where the Saint was baptized. Next day the two Mothers left Spain. They had need of the precious memories of this happy pilgrimage, for the storm of trial and persecution was about to break.

## CHAPTER V.

DECREES OF 1880—BARCELONA FOUNDATION—  
RETREAT FROM MADURA—DEFINITE APPROBA-  
TION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS.

BEFORE beginning to describe political events in France, we must record the lamented death in the late autumn of 1879 of Valentine Riant; in religion Sister Mary of the Heart of Jesus. She was a novice of great promise and in the very bloom of youth, being only twenty years of age when God took her to Himself.

The year 1880 saw the beginning of the struggle in France. The Freemasons being ready to organise the plan of campaign against the Church, open war was declared on the Religious Orders.

The Mother General was in Rome when the storm broke. At the request of Mother Mary de Saint Louis de Gonzague, Superior of the Community in Paris, she hurried back to France, arriving in the beginning of April. The Civil Authorities fixed 30th June as the date for bringing into action the abominable decrees, which aimed at the total extinction of the Religious Orders, and on the appointed day began the melancholy scenes of expulsion. We need not recall the odious details; they have been too

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often related. The fate of Communities of women was not as yet determined. Mother Mary of St Maurice writes to a distant friend: "You must, by perusing the daily papers, know as much about French affairs as we do ourselves. You realise, I suppose, that all Congregations are threatened with the closing of their Chapels, pending still more drastic measures. It is deplorable. What a dismal prospect! Our Chapels closing one by one. Perhaps, even, they may be hermetically sealed. Let us implore grace from above and patience to bear trials and persecutions, of which Our Lord, only, knows the reward. I just go on from day to day, I make no plans, I merely await events. All is confusion, our only hope is in prayer." And in another letter: "What *will* become of our Chapels? They will almost certainly be closed. It is heart-breaking. May Christ keep us, may He deign to remain in His Sanctuary, may His Holy Will be done. He will know how to turn evil into good." Public opinion, however, was not ripe for a simultaneous attack on the Congregations of women. The Government realised that it would be better to defer the crowning achievements of excluding nuns from hospitals, schools, even from their cloisters, and was for the moment sufficiently occupied in expelling, during the month of June, all members of Communities of men consecrated to active works, and, in October, all those who belonged to the teaching orders.

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The Mother General had thought it well to be ready for the worst, and had arranged that the novices of Toulouse and Le Mans should take refuge at Tournai. She also, in spite of her many preoccupations, was actively furthering the general well-being of her Society, and the idea of the Barcelona Foundation especially appealed to her in the present melancholy circumstances.

Accordingly, in the early summer of 1880, she decided to send two nuns to Barcelona, Mother Mary of the Eucharist, Assistant General of Spain, and Mother Mary of Perpetual Succour, a Spanish nun, who was very tactful and clever. They obtained the most gratifying results, and their experiences at the outset might be compared with those which befell the great Foundress of Mount Carmel.

"It is a Foundation on the pattern of St Theresa," said Mother Mary of St Maurice laughingly, and she was quite right. The two nuns arrived at Barcelona late on the evening of 26th May. They timidly presented themselves at the Convent of Our Lady of Loretto, which had offered to receive them, only to find that the Superior was ill and could not be disturbed, and that no one seemed to know anything about them. After long discussions they were grudgingly permitted to take shelter for the night, and were given a scanty meal.

The next day, however, the Superior, Mme

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de Lesseps, a most amiable and distinguished person, was accessible, and more than apologetic when all was explained. Everything was put right. The two nuns received much kindness and were duly grateful ; indeed, instead of going into the town, as had been the first intention, they remained as guests at Loretto until their own home was ready for them. On all sides they experienced great kindness and help. The Bishop, Mgr. Urquinaona and Canon Morgadès were especially watchful of the interests of the new Community. We must also mention M. Antonio Escolano, who, from the first, was a firm and faithful friend. His daughter Antonia soon became a novice of Marie Réparatrice, and henceforth he played the part of an affectionate father to all the nuns. The Bishop held a subscription list of persons who were willing to contribute to the upkeep of candles for the altar. He headed the list of names himself, and kept the candles for the first Friday of each month, on which day he also said Mass in the Chapel. The two nuns worked so hard that by 22nd August it was possible to have the religious enclosure and open the Chapel. Truth to say, only bare necessities were to be seen : a straw mattress on the floors of the cells, no other furniture whatever, but the Mother General had written : “ Only get what is absolutely necessary. Let us hope that later on we shall be able to afford more, but just at present we must expect neither

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comfort nor daintiness, nor even the arrangements for order and regularity which will be needed in the future.” However, the infant Community was not forgotten by Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, under whose protection it had been placed. One wintry evening an unknown lady came to the door and asked if it were true that the Superior and her daughters were sleeping on the floor for lack of bedsteads. On being told that such was the case, she inquired the number of beds and went away. The same evening the beds arrived. The lady’s name never transpired. Many similar incidents occurred. How true it is, that to those who trust in God “full measure and running over” will be given.

It was well that Mother Mary of St Maurice had comfort and pleasure in the good accounts of the Barcelona Community, for her cares and troubles were multiplying; so much so, indeed, that her health was visibly affected. However, she put her trust in God and never allowed herself to be discouraged. One great disappointment and grief was the state of matters in India at Madura.

When the Jesuit fathers of that province had asked the help of Marie Réparatrice in the Mission, they had in view the formation of Communities of native nuns. The Réparatrice nuns threw themselves ardently into the difficult and ungrateful task and, in spite of numerous sorrows and losses,

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they nobly succeeded in their efforts. The moment had now come (in the view of the Ecclesiastical Superiors) when the Indian Sisters would be able to accomplish what was required on their own initiative; nay, that they might even do more, if the Europeans quitted the field entirely.

During the very first year of her Generalship Mother Mary of St Maurice began to understand the wishes and intentions of the Vicar-Apostolic and some of the fathers, and it was a very bitter grief to her. She was deeply interested in Foreign Missions, and the idea of leaving Madura was most painful. The good work there had never appeared more flourishing. The nuns were most devoted, and their efforts, their goodness and their courage, seemed to be appreciated by God and man alike. To show how greatly the Community was loved and valued, we venture to quote at length from a letter only recently received from the Rev. Father Procurator of the Jesuits at Madura.

In my journeyings I have frequently come upon the memory of the Réparatrice nuns. The immense good they did is still plainly visible in many places at Tuticorin, St Francis Xavier's town. I was impressed on my arrival by the women's Retreats. Silence and recollection were observed as though in a Convent, and I was informed it was the results of the methods and traditions of the Réparatrice nuns at Tuticorin. There are some very good Christian families, such as the Roches

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and the Gomez, several of whose children have entered religion. Father T. Roche told me that his mother, a really admirable woman, was trained in Christianity by the Réparatrice nuns, and that she was still deeply attached to them. "You cannot imagine how much our Eurasian families loved them," he said, "and how deep was the grief when they were obliged to leave Tuticorin."

The two great orphanages of Trichinopoly and Adeikalabouram still exist on the traditions of Marie Réparatrice, but their principal task in Madura was the forming of Indian girls for the religious life. I really believe Providence placed them there for that, and then recalled them when the young plants they had reared were full-grown trees. I have heard it said that we owe the two flourishing native Congregations at Madura (St Anne, Notre Dame des Douleurs) to Marie Réparatrice. These Congregations do wonderful work in our girls' schools and orphanages. They direct thirty schools, in which thousands of little Indian girls learn to bless Our Lord's Name. There are about 350 sisters. There would be many more, were not consumption so prevalent, and also that many Indians are not able to pay the small *dot*, which we, owing to the poverty of the Mission, are obliged to ask. The Réparatrice Sisters trained the first nuns, and they did it perfectly.

During a period extending over thirty years, I frequently saw the Rev. Mother of Notre Dame des Douleurs. She spoke to me with *emotion* of her

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dear nuns, to whom, after God, she owed *all*. It is quite certain that without Marie Réparatrice the fathers would never have been able to train these Indian Sisters who are to-day so numerous and so devout. The thousands of souls they save are the result of the sufferings, the labours, the lives even of the Réparatrice nuns, and perhaps also of the last supreme sacrifice—the abandonment of the Mission.

Mother Mary of St Maurice felt the blow most keenly. “The Foreign Mission element of the Society,” said she, “is what so greatly attracted me, and I, Superior-General, am asked to relinquish it.” To her own grief was added the distress she was forced to lay on others, but for long she had accustomed herself not to delay or dally with duty, and after having weighed everything, and prayed for guidance, she decided to recall her nuns.

She never really quite got over the disappointment, though she was never bitter about it nor complained. “It is a time of crosses and thorns,” she wrote, “Our Divine Master knows all, He will turn them into graces and blessings.” One of the Madura nuns, Mother Mary of Bethany, was practically dying when the order of retreat was given. So they had to wait until the Lord had gathered in this ripe ear of corn, before they quitted the field rendered so fruitful by their tears and prayers. The dying nun was glad “to depart and

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be with Christ.” In her last moments she kissed her crucifix fervently, murmuring, “Beloved Lord, I am glad to go, to be with You for ever.” This was the sixteenth nun of Marie Réparatrice to give her life in the service of the Mission.

All possible precautions had been taken to keep the departure of the nuns as quiet as possible, but somehow the Indians heard of it. There was a general outburst of sorrow. We give here some part of an article published by the Madras *Mail*, with the letter which was addressed by the Indians to the Holy Father.

I saw in one of your last numbers an extract from *The South Indian Post* concerning the closing of the European Convent of the Réparatrice nuns of this Station. It is not necessary to expatiate on the benefit to Catholic Society of this noble Institution. But, as the event is of great importance to Christian Society in general, I venture to send you a copy of the Memorial signed by a great number of Europeans and native Christians, which is to go to the Pope by the next mail. I shall be very grateful if you will insert it in your valuable paper.

TO HIS HOLINESS LEO XIII, SOVEREIGN PONTIFF,—May it please Your Holiness, we, the undersigned Catholic and other Christians, beg permission to lay our humble Memorial at your feet. To our very great regret and surprise we learned, a few days since, that the venerated Réparatrices at Trichinopoly were making preparations to close the Convent and leave the Station.

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We at once called a meeting to consider the matter and to beg Your Holiness to command them to remain. We sent a telegram to this effect, fearing otherwise to be too late. Now we humbly beg to submit a copy of the business of the meeting. It is unnecessary to represent to Your Holiness the immense loss which the closing of the Convent will involve. These venerable Mothers, during the twenty-two years of their life here, have thrown themselves heart and soul into good works, which have been of incalculable value to our land. (1) They have educated European and Eurasian children, and have looked after the pariahs, who otherwise would have been completely neglected; for no other school or institution of any kind exists for that class. (2) The Mothers direct a very fine orphanage of nearly 500 souls in Trichinopoly. (3) They offer shelter to poor homeless widows, by way of preventing infanticide, and the abandonment of children. It is calculated that in India there are close on 8,000,000 widows who cannot remarry, and much evil arises, and the Government is powerless in the face of this misery. But the venerable Mothers have accomplished much in the way of relief for the poor creatures, and many of their children have been saved from destruction. (4) They are a refuge for the poor, the old and the sick; all of whom they assist in various ways. (5) The native nuns are not sufficiently advanced to be capable of responding to the needs of the Christian native women; still less will they be able to instruct the European, Eurasian, and pariah children, for the insurmountable prejudices of caste will not permit

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them to mix with this part of the Christian population, which, however, is greater in point of fact than that of the Christian Hindoos of the Station.

We beg, in conclusion, with all humility and submission, that Your Holiness will take into consideration the needs of our suffering population, and we pray that Your Holiness may graciously annul the order for the closing of the Convent of Marie Réparatrice, which gives shelter to our souls and to our bodies alike.

The Memorial in conclusion begs the Pope's blessing for all the Christians of the Station, and is signed *Vox Populi*.

The Holy Father sent this touching epistle to the Mother General. She had, herself, received countless letters and telegrams, but she, on her own initiative, was powerless to change a decision which had practically been forced on her. The touching fidelity of the Indians was some small consolation for her wounded feelings, and the act accomplished, she tried to forget it as much as possible. She was always her most delightful self in troubles and difficulties. She would tide over unpleasant situations with wonderful tact, delicacy and prudence. Once a good Bishop was talking to her about some people who were known to look askance at her Society. "What would they say," said he, with a malicious smile, "if they could see me here at this moment?" "I think, my Lord, that they would rejoice with us in the pleasure

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which your presence gives," replied Mother Mary of St Maurice. The Bishop was charmed and loved to recall the story. Mother Mary of St Maurice did not rest content with visiting her various Community houses once a year. She frequently wrote most inspiring letters. From one, which deals with the sorrows of the Church during the persecution in France, we give some passages :

BELOVED DAUGHTERS,—the Peace of Jesus,—  
Profoundly moved by the evils which are at the present time ravaging France, afflicting Holy Church and wounding the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, I am constrained to appeal to your generosity and to remind you what Our Master has the right to expect in days such as these. We are called by Divine Providence to lead, in the sight of the wicked world, lives of complete self-sacrifice, self-effacement, and devotion to the interests of Heaven. We ought, also, to pray that God's Mercy may temper His Justice. It is our part, at the present crisis, when the powers of evil are so in evidence, to redouble our zeal and our prayers, in order to appease the Divine Wrath. I know, dear children, that you are grieved to the heart at the insults offered to Our Lord, and that you fervently desire to console His Sacred Heart. I am, thus, sure of your loyal co-operation when I approach you, imploring you to cast yourselves with ardour, generosity, and love into the great work of Reparation. I especially beg you to be very fervent in your adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This Act of Worship holds the place of

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honour in our Constitutions which were drawn up by our venerated Mother Mary of Jesus. Ah! more than ever, at this crisis in our history, when Our Lord is banished from so many of His temples and thus deprived of the homage of the Faithful, ought we, with heart and soul, by day and night, to accomplish this sacred duty of adoration. God, who has conferred upon us this great act as an essential part of our vocation, will give us grace and strength to devote ourselves wholly and entirely to His interests . . .

Mother Mary of St Maurice ever deemed self-immolation and love of others to be the necessary and sure foundations of the vocations to Marie Réparatrice, and Father Blanchard, a devoted friend of the Society, strikes the same note when he writes:—

Réparatrices, you are now called to serve the Sacred Heart of Jesus by imploring Divine mercy on France and on Holy Church. Your lives of faith, adoration and sacrifice may avert the Wrath of Heaven and shorten the time of trial. The more I know you, the firmer my conviction that if you act up to the high mark of your calling you will accomplish great things. Be true Réparatrices and may the sweet savour of sacrifice arising from your good works help to heal our poor sick world.

Father Blanchard once said of Mother Mary of St Maurice (and he knew her almost better than anyone else did) that her mission in life was to foster the great work of **R**eparation.

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She was, ere long, to have the joy of seeing the seal set upon her life's work. Her beloved little Society was to take its place among the great religious Orders which the Church honours with its definite approval.

For some time past, Mother Mary of St Maurice had been hesitating and wondering if the time were come when she should approach Rome on the important matter of recognising the Constitutions of Marie Réparatrice, when, suddenly, on the 6th of January 1882, an unexpected event banished all her doubts.

Cardinal Monaco la Valetta, Vicar of His Holiness Leo XIII, had celebrated Mass in the old house of the Via degli Artisti, after which he addressed a few words to the Community. During his discourse he happened to remark that, if the Divine Will did not very clearly indicate the way in an important decision, one should at once ask advice of the chosen Ministers of God, who are there to do His Will. These words were as a ray of light to the Mother General. She at once made up her mind to consult the Cardinal on the important matter so near her heart, and to abide by his decision. He emphatically advised her not to delay, but to appeal at once to the High Authorities. Mother Mary of St Maurice immediately began her intricate and important negotiations.

At the outset, she wrote to the Very Rev. General of the Jesuits and begged that Father Gin hac, the

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devoted friend of the venerated Foundress of Marie Réparatrice, might be permitted to come to Rome to assist in the work of revision of the Constitutions, preparatory to sending them for definite approbation. She was half afraid that her request would be refused, and was overjoyed when Father Beckx replied as follows : “ The Termination of your Constitutions will so greatly redound to the Glory of God, that I have no hesitation in lending you Father Ginhac. I had to write to the Father Provincial at Toulouse, to know when he (Father Ginhac) could be spared, and I am glad to tell you that he will be with you early in March.” Mother Mary of St Maurice exclaims in a note to the Paris Superior : “ How good God is ! I have asked the father to give a Retreat to me and to the Assistant Generals ; we shall thus be strengthened in the undertaking. He has consented to do as I wish and the Retreat begins on the fourth.”

Father Ginhac came to Rome by way of Loretto. Here he placed the Society of Marie Réparatrice and all its needs under the special protection of Our Lady. On all sides prayers were offered that the gifts of the Holy Ghost might descend on the little cenacle in Rome where, silently and peacefully, the important work of revision went on.

Mother Mary of St Maurice wrote also to the Bishops in whose dioceses the Society was established, to ask them to write to the Holy See, imploring the definite approbation of the Consti-

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tutions. By the end of May, all the necessary documents had been forwarded to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

This important undertaking accomplished, the Mother now decided to pay a visit to Barcelona. There her presence was ardently desired, and she, herself, was anxious to visit the Community, which, in very truth, seemed to be under the special protection of Providence. After a few days at Toulouse she stopped at Pau, at which place a relation of Mother Mary of Jesus was in great grief. The Baroness de Brien en had just lost her only daughter and was inconsolable. Mother Mary of St Maurice felt for her deeply, and was anxious to show her practical sympathy by attending the funeral, which took place in the Réparatrice Chapel. Mme de Brien en was very much gratified at this delicate attention, and thanked the Mother General warmly. "I feel," said she, "that one thing only now holds me to earth; namely, the work my daughter undertook for your Community. I will devote myself heart and soul to it, until the time comes for me to join her in our true Home above."

On 14th June Mother Mary of St Maurice and her Secretary arrived at Barcelona. As the train drew into the station a lady looked out and exclaimed: "Dear me, someone important must be arriving by this train; there are quite a number of priests and other people waiting to meet it." The Mother General stole a glance at the platform,

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then, turning to her companion, she whispered blushing and half laughing: "Goodness, I do believe it is for us!" In very truth the Grand Penitentiary, Bishop-Designate of Vich, several priests and canons and a crowd of well-wishers had assembled to meet and greet the Mother General. Five carriages were waiting at the station entrance. The employés, greatly impressed, declined to take the keys to open the luggage, as is usual here.

Mother Mary of St Maurice, with her accustomed dignity and simplicity, said a few words of gratitude for the splendid reception, and the cortège then started for the little modest Convent. We will leave the Secretary to relate the manner of the welcome they received there.

After describing the reception at the station, she says:

When we arrived at the house we found a crowd of children and sight-seers outside, and the Mother was led to the public Chapel where, surrounded by all and sundry, she prayed for a time. It appears that they would have liked to sing a *Te Deum*, but the Mother Superior had stopped that idea, knowing that Mother Mary of St Maurice would much dislike it. When we got to the parlour we found a fresh circle of friends. Mother Mary of St Maurice spoke a few words of gratitude, and said that her first petition in the Chapel had been on behalf of the generous benefactors of the house. Then the Mother Superior, saying that our Mother was eagerly awaited by the Com-

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munity, dismissed all the visitors. To-day fresh surprises awaited us, High Mass, at nine, which was sung by gentlemen, who had themselves installed an organ in the public Chapel. Our Mother and I were greatly touched as we reflected on the small beginnings of this Foundation. God has indeed done great things for us.

A few weeks later, on 21st July, the new Bishop of Vich, Mgr. Morgadès, said Mass in the little Réparatrice Chapel. This was not an occasion of unmixed joy, for the Community realised that by his elevation it was losing a most valued friend and protector. However, all ended well, for the Bishop asked the nuns to found a Community at Manresa in his diocese. Later on he became Bishop of Barcelona, and never failed in his fatherly interest and kindness.

On the Mother General's return to Rome in October she was overwhelmed with delicate, difficult tasks, which took up most of her time during the year 1883. Unfortunately, she also had several violent attacks of Roman fever, from which her constitution never quite recovered. Still, in one way, 1883 was a joyful year. For, on 18th April, His Holiness Leo XIII signed the Decree which definitely approved the Constitutions of Marie Réparatrice. The Holy Father also granted a Plenary Indulgence to all the members of the Society on the day chosen for the promulgation of the Decree.

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The joy and gratitude of the Mother General were unbounded ; she could not be sufficiently grateful to Heaven. Her Secretary writes : “ The affection of Our Lord for her was ever manifest. Thus, when she was more than usually perturbed in any way, I felt certain that a special grace would speedily bring relief and consolation. Her troubles seemed to evaporate, she was ever so submissive and so serenely confident.”

The 2nd of May was fixed for the promulgation of the Decree. On that same day, twenty-five years before, Mother Mary of Jesus had made her vows with her first chosen companions. It was a strange and happy coincidence. In Rome the Mother General sang her favourite “ Magnificat,” and thought with thankfulness of her children, far and near, uniting in their hymn of joy and praise. On this great occasion she wrote the following letter to the Community at large :

ROME, 25th April 1883.

MY VERY DEAR DAUGHTERS,—The Peace of Jesus,—I come, my heart full of joy and gratitude, to tell you of the great grace Our Lord has shown to the Society, in proof of His love and mercy towards us. Let us unite in fervent and grateful prayer. Our Holy Father Pope Leo XIII in a Decree, dated 18th April, has deigned to definitely approve and confirm the Constitutions of the Society of Marie Réparatrice. His Holiness also accords the Apostolical Benediction to all its

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members and a Plenary Indulgence on the 2nd May, the date on which the Approbation will be promulgated and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Society. Heaven has not willed that our venerated Foundress should, while on earth, have the joy of seeing her work accomplished, her labours and sufferings crowned for ever by the sanction of the Vicar of Christ, and that we, on this auspicious day should have the happiness of beholding her bodily presence. Our faith, however, assures us, that from her place in Heaven she shares in our joy and calls down blessings on her little family. May we fervently unite in responding to the Will of God and do honour to the Church and good to the souls of men. I need hardly impress on you, dear children, the increased obligations which arise for us in this formal recognition of our Constitutions. They indicate to each and all of us the perfection to which we attain by fidelity and observation of our rules. If we are always true to our ideals of gratitude, respect and love to our Constitutions we shall indeed be true *Réparatrices*. Obedience will be the beacon, lighting our way; our humility and contempt for the things of this world will be the solid foundations of our Vocation. . . . By a special dispensation of Providence, it happens that the Very Rev. Father General of the Society of Jesus, to whose kindness we owe the precious treasure of our Constitutions, will be in Rome the very day of the signing of the formal approval and, in spite of his great age, he purposes giving us the gratification of his fatherly presence and blessing.

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In gratitude to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, I ask that, on the evening of 2nd May, a solemn *Te Deum* shall be sung in all our houses at Benediction. I further desire that each and all of our members shall offer Holy Communion and thanksgiving on three consecutive days, and that on the same days the “*Magnificat*” shall be said by all in Our Lady’s honour.

May the divine hearts of Jesus and Mary fill you with their love, my dear daughters, and may you be enabled to march bravely in the ways of Reparation. I beg your prayers and remain your devoted

MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE,  
*Superior General, S.M.R.*

This memorable day of thanksgiving, renewed, as it is, year by year, in the Society of Marie Réparatrice, reached its full measure of joy in the audience granted by the Pope. On 10th May the Mother General and her Assistants waited on His Holiness to express the gratitude of the whole Society. Mother Mary of St Maurice further ordained that, every year, in memory of the Signal Grace accorded by the Pontiff, Holy Communion should be offered on his Feast-day for his intention. . . .

About this period another favour, more personal and intimate and very special in its nature, was received by the Mother General. The Rev. Father Blanchard, Provincial of Toulouse, was named Assistant-General of France. He had for long

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been Mother Mary of St Maurice's wise and prudent director, and now his headquarters would be near her own.

We must say a few words on the subject of this holy priest who, like Father Gin hac, was devoted to the Society of Marie Réparatrice. He happened to be Provincial at Toulouse, when Mother Mary of St Maurice was appointed Superior in that town. She chose him as her director and to assist her in her government. Father Blanchard was well aware of the eminent qualities of the new Superior, and mutual esteem, which was only terminated by death, was strong between director and penitent. "I wish," said Father Blanchard, "that I could show Mother Mary of St Maurice's letters to her Society; they would reveal the beauty of her mind." Father Blanchard foresaw Mother Mary of St Maurice's aptitude for the Generalship, and before she was elected wrote her the letter following:—

VALS, 27th May 1878.

DEAR REV. MOTHER,—I am of opinion that the little Community at Toulouse will do excellently. You are all in the best dispositions, united heart and soul and mind in acting for the greater glory of our Divine Lord. The Holy Spirit will surely be content with such goodwill, and will not refuse the gifts of wisdom and light in the decisive hour. You know, dear Mother, that I am praying fervently for you. Many masses and Communions will be offered for you on the day

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of the election, and many prayers will arise on your behalf. I feel sure that your beloved Society will soon have a Mother after the model of the Immaculate Mother, its holy Patroness. My return to Toulouse is deferred for a few days. I return on 5th June after my visit to Montpellier, which begins on Saturday evening, the very day on which you will be introduced to your new Mother. Poor Mother! I pity her, she will need to breathe a fervent "Sursum Corda." I hope she will be practically intelligent and perfectly submissive to the Will of Heaven. You know the ineffable sweetness of such an attitude. Should you have any pressing communication, such as the name of the newly-elected Mother, to make, write to me at Montpellier. Courage, and be ever ready with your "Fiat." I unite myself with you in prayer, and am, with deep respect, ever, dear Rev. Mother, your humble and devoted servant in Christ.

G. BLANCHARD, S.J.

Father Blanchard had not been the only one to prophesy the election of Mother Mary of St Maurice. One day, in Rome, the Rev. Father Laurent, who had known her during the exercises of her long Retreat, was in her absence giving a conference to the Community. He remarked during his discourse that when the Chapter was called to replace the venerated Mother Foundress, he said to himself: "If the Mothers listen to the Voice of Wisdom they will choose Mother Mary of St Maurice." He added, turning to the

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Assistant-Generals present: “And, you<sup>s</sup>, *did* listen to the Voice of Wisdom.”

Mother Mary of St Maurice had greatly at heart the carrying out of one of the most powerful means of sanctification offered by the Society to young nuns, who had not as yet taken the final vows, and in the autumn of 1883 she organised a third year of probation, during which the whole of the exercises of St Ignatius are followed. The nuns are thus initiated more fully into the spirit of the Society, and become thoroughly impregnated with love of its duties and virtues. The first great Retreat was given by Father Blanchard, and the result of the exercises was splendid. All were strengthened in their devotion to their Lord, and eager to suffer with and for Him.

Heaven was not content merely to bless the work of the Mother General. It watched over her personal safety. On going to France in August 1883, she, being ill with fever, was obliged to stop at Basle to recruit. This, as it turned out, was providential. A few hours later the train she had left dashed violently into an express coming at full speed. Many persons were killed or injured. It was keenly felt by the members of the Society of Marie Réparatrice, that Providence had been graciously pleased to show special favour to the Society, in thus preserving the life of their beloved Mother General.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SECOND CHAPTER GENERAL FOUNDATIONS — PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND — FAMILY MOURNING.

WITH the advent of the year 1884 recurred in the Society of Marie Réparatrice the date fixed by the Constitutions for the holding of the General Chapter. Mother Mary of St Maurice convoked the Superiors of the houses of her Institute to assemble on the 1st of June at Toulouse, in which town, as in 1878, the important function was to be held. Before she left Rome Leo XIII granted a special audience to the Mother General. She begged the Apostolic blessing, as a pledge of Divine guidance at the impending Chapter. "This audience," she writes, "about which much might be related, has afforded the utmost satisfaction to heart and mind alike. The Holy Father could not have been kinder. He surpassed our highest hopes." The Pope was interested in each individual present. One nun happened to mention that she was a native of Crete. "Ah!" said the Pope, "there is Mount Ida; it is the home of Homer," and he began to recite dramatically from the great poet. "Youthful memories," he remarked smilingly, when he had finished the lines; "I have not recited these

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verses for more than forty years." Before the audience the nuns had assisted at the Holy Father's Mass and had received communion from his hands. They were all enchanted by his simplicity and kindness.

On 25th May the Mother General repaired to Toulouse, where the Rev. Father Ginhaac was to give the Retreat to the Mothers in Chapter. She was, as ever, the life and soul of the gathering; she seemed inspired with love and wisdom from above.

This Chapter was the beginning of an era of happiness and prosperity. It was as though God showed approval of the Pope's pronouncement in favour of the Society of Marie Réparatrice by causing it to spread with astonishing rapidity.

In July of this same year, 1884, the Most Rev. Dr Butler, Bishop of Limerick, begged the Mother General to incorporate into her Society a Community of Adoration nuns which were established in his episcopal city. The Mother General seriously considered this demand and finally decided to send a delegate to Limerick, herself reserving the right of asking Propaganda to sanction the union of the two Communities. Mother Mary of St Monica, Superior of the Mission of the Mauritius and Bourbon, was entrusted with the delicate task. She acquitted herself so admirably that from the very first she won over all, with the exception of two or three individuals, who had determined

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beforehand to withdraw themselves. The Bishop was delighted and anxious to make her, from the outset, Superior of the Community. To this the Mother General gave her consent, and Mother Mary of St Monica only relinquished her important office on becoming, a few years later, Provincial of England and Belgium. At Limerick her place was taken by another much esteemed Mother, who won the affection of all who knew her. Mother Mary of St Flavie also, in her turn, became Provincial, and after many labours and great suffering passed to her well-deserved repose on 9th February 1913. Of her the Mother General writes: "She knows the Society thoroughly and is truly broad-minded, open, truthful and good. To her may well be applied the words of Wisdom: 'The just shall live for ever more and their reward is with the Most High.'" (Wisdom v. 16.)

On the 7th September 1884 the Mother General went herself to Limerick to clothe her new daughters in Our Lady's livery. She was deeply gratified by the good dispositions of the members of the Community. They, on their part, conceived enduring filial affection for their Mother. "I," writes one, "felt from the very first instant the highest possible esteem and veneration for Mother Mary of St Maurice. I was proud to own her as my Superior during the whole course of my religious life. She was ever a true Mother, to whom I could turn in all difficulties, knowing that

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I should find sympathy and help. Each of her letters and visits left in my heart a greater love of the Society and a more ardent desire to devote myself to it."

On her return to Paris the Mother General decided to build a large house in the Rue de Naples on ground offered to her by Monsieur and Madame Mignon in memory of their beloved niece, Valentine Riant. For long she had been pressed to begin the work of construction, but, in view of the more than uncertain future, she had, up till now, hesitated. One day she asked the opinion of Mgr. di Rende, the Papal Nuncio, on the matter, and received the original and expressive rejoinder: "If you have ground in the Rue de Naples make it serve as a cabbage patch!" However, year succeeded year in seeming tranquillity, and it became increasingly difficult not to respond to the generosity of the donors, and so the new Convent was built, M. Riant and other benefactors contributing largely to its construction and to that of the exquisite Chapel, which was its chief ornament. The Réparatrices were now established in a central part of Paris, and their works extended in many directions.

Less than fifteen years later Mother Mary of St Maurice was once again in this dear abode with the sad duty to perform of dispersing its members and assisting at the last Mass in the beautiful Chapel which, rather than see it put to profane

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use, it had been decided to entirely destroy. Fortunately, M. Riant was no longer on earth to behold the ruin of his fairest hopes. He had died in February 1897. He was indeed a true Christian, and he was regretted by all, and especially by the Society of Marie Réparatrice, which, as the chosen home of his beloved only daughter, had been to him as his own household. But we will not anticipate these melancholy days, they will find their own place in this history.

We are now telling of that happy period during which the sanctuaries of reparation abounded in almost all parts of the world, pledges, seemingly, of the love, gratitude and zeal of Mother Mary of St Maurice.

On 2nd December 1885 the Mother General returned to Rome. A great idea filled her, heart and soul: the thought of a Foundation of Marie Réparatrice in Jerusalem. There were very few religious Communities in the Holy City, and none had Perpetual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The queen of cities, upon whom had risen the glory of the Lord, where Christ had accomplished our redemption, should not she have her sanctuary of reparation? So, at least, thought Mother Mary of St Maurice, and this cherished vision she had, for long, silently and prayerfully contemplated. She desired that her children should continue at the foot of the altar, the first adoring reparation of the Blessed Mother on

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Mount Calvary. It was her wish that, here, in the Holy City, where the Crescent instead of the Cross is flaunted in the sight of Heaven, the Immaculate Host, shining forth from the Monstrance, should be perpetually exposed to the adoration of the Faithful. The great words of the Prophet Isaiah resounded in her ears: "The nations shall march towards Thy Light, and kings to the brightness of Thy Rising. Thy sons shall come from far." Her daughters, too, should come from all parts to pray in the quiet Retreat, not far removed from the hallowed ground where their Redeemer once watched in agony. They would pray for the salvation of sinners and that God's Holy Will might be fulfilled in the whole human race, striving thus to re-echo the prayer of Gethsemane: "Thy Will, not Mine, be done." The grave difficulties which such an enterprise presented by no means escaped the clear vision of the Mother General. She foresaw all the reasons of the refusal which would be given to the establishment of a new Community, particularly to a cloistered Community, the utility and suitability of which would not be generally appreciated. Her confidence, however, remained unshaken. God had inspired her with one of those deep convictions which are rather strengthened than weakened by human opposition. Her faith did not permit her to rest content with vain longings: full well she knew that God is not satisfied with half-hearted

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service. The first advances to Propaganda in May 1886 had but small success, but the Mother General was by no means dismayed. A letter to a friend of the Society, who was in her confidence and who was of great assistance, will show her high ideal and the spirit which animated her.

I was glad to hear the for and against of the scheme, which occupies us *ad majorem Dei gloriam*; it is most necessary to consider every detail. As I have never been in the Holy Land, I daresay I have not so complete and exact a knowledge as you, who several times have visited and studied these places, from the point of view which concerns us, namely, the good to be done there and the furthering of the greater glory of God. I think all your ideas very true and quite appreciate them, but am none the less convinced at all points that Marie Réparatrice has her appointed place in Jerusalem and could do a great work there. Indeed, it seems to me that, if she is well directed and seconded, she might be more powerful in Jerusalem than anywhere else. By seconded, I mean protected by the Patriarch, and, anyway, by some of the influential clergy. Without their protection it would be hardly possible to do good and to firmly establish the Society. Consider the probable result of our enterprise. Imagine Our Lord, exalted on His Throne of Love, shedding His blessing around in response to the perpetual flow of adoration which would arise from the holy and, alas! outraged place. It seems to me that He would be more consoled and glorified than

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elsewhere, and that immense and incalculable benefits would descend upon the land.

It is true that human action counts for much. God frequently makes use of it—appears even to need it. But what of Divine Grace which can so easily change the very aspect of the world? Ah, yes! Jesus in the Eucharist would surely draw infidel souls to Himself and would illuminate and vivify the land; Mary, at His side, praying, adoring, sacrificing herself, offering perpetual atonement for the outrages perpetuated against the Divine Majesty and the evil wrought in man by sin, would not fail to have long and lasting results, and would convey to many souls the knowledge and love of Christ. It appears to me, that, in the Holy Land, above all other lands, mighty works are needed—works which, though apparent to all, exist really by prayer and sacrifice. Works which do not confine themselves to that which heretics and infidels could themselves accomplish, such as educating the young and caring for the sick. Hospitals and schools, taken alone, will not suffice to transform a country; you know, too, that we, as missionaries, must, without infringing our Constitutions, undertake to perform whatever may contribute to the greater good of the country in which we are placed. Thus, in India, we instituted native nuns, in order that they might accomplish what we, ourselves, could not perform. We founded many orphanages, crèches and hospitals where, under our supervision, these native nuns did devoted work. In the Mauritius, at the present time, more than six hundred boys and girls receive religious

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instruction in our schools, and hundreds of women of all ages attend our various Retreats and Reunions, and are upheld and strengthened in duty and piety and converted in great numbers to the Faith. We also have, in the Mauritius, an orphanage where we are helped by native nuns, who are trained by us, and who serve us very faithfully. It is not possible, at present, to say in what our precise work at Jerusalem would consist. So much depends on locality, circumstances, the amount of funds at our disposal. I merely enumerate these various details to give you an idea of what we *can* accomplish. The language would be no hindrance. The Mothers can learn Arabic as easily as Tamul. Faith and goodwill will accomplish all things.

It soon became very evident that the high hopes of Mother Mary of St Maurice had the Divine Sanction. In the first instance, a powerful protector appeared in the person of Cardinal Parocchi, Vicar of His Holiness. From the outset he appreciated the importance of the proposed Foundation and did all in his power to facilitate matters. Then, material aid was most opportunely available at this critical moment. It happened that the dearly-loved parents of Mother Mary of St Maurice were on the point of celebrating their golden wedding. They signalled the happy occasion by presenting to each of their children a gift of money: in Mother Mary of St Maurice's case, a sum of 100,000 francs (about £4000). One

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can imagine the joy caused by this princely gift, and the pride and pleasure with which the Mother General was thus, in the name of her own family, able to lay the sure foundation of her longed-for Community in the Holy City.

Writing later, in 1886, Mother Mary of St Maurice thus describes the actual beginnings of her great enterprise :

Mother Mary of the Eucharist, accompanied by Mother Mary of the Blessed Gonzales, is now on the spot, endeavouring to choose a suitable site—no easy task, for when it is known that Catholics, and more especially religious, wish to establish themselves in Jerusalem, ground-rents mount up in a really appalling way, and many Communities have been compelled to renounce the idea of settling there. I feel positive that this very unique Foundation will add much to our prestige and will vivify and increase in us the love and desire of Reparation. We Réparatrices, who aim at acting the part of Mary towards Jesus, should most certainly have our place there, where He lived and suffered and died ; where Mary, Our Blessed Mother, loved her Divine Son ; where Our Lord instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Oh ! I feel sure our wish will be understood by all. Fortunately, the Holy Father, the Cardinal Vicar, and the Patriarch of Jerusalem understand already. They are persuaded that we have a right to be at Jerusalem ; so much so indeed, that we have been preferred before other Communities who, at the same time as ourselves,

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were making the same demand. We mean to begin in a very small way.

Indeed humble beginnings were, from the Mother General's point of view, necessary for all religious Foundations. She had at heart the saying of Joseph de Maistre: "Nothing truly great ever began magnificently." It is recorded of her that once, when visiting one of her houses, which by reason of special circumstances had been begun on a large scale, she remarked: "It is very fine—much too fine for us—we shall not be able to keep it."

The departure of the two Mothers for Jerusalem had been kept quiet until 22nd February. On that day, the Patriarch having authorised the laying of the foundation-stone, the good news was made public amidst general rejoicing. The Patriarch, who that year was visiting Rome *ad limina*, assured the Mother General of his great interest in her Society, and begged the Holy Father's blessing for the future Community at Jerusalem. On 6th July the Patriarch presided at the opening of the little temporary Chapel. These two Mothers, the first to enter the Holy Land, had the great joy of being present at the various touching ceremonies of Holy Week. Their pious emotions found a sympathetic response in the heart of their Mother General. Mother Mary of the Eucharist writes:

On Holy Thursday we made our Easter Duty at the hands of the Patriarch, who officiated before the Holy Sepulchre. Mother Mary de Gonzales

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watched the night through in the Basilica. How I envied her! Alas! my advanced age prevented my following her example. However, never shall I forget the Office of Good Friday there on Calvary, where Our Lord suffered on the Cross. With what unutterable emotion I listened to the chanting of St John's Gospel. But the most touching moment was the one in which the priest, taking the book of the Gospel and laying it upon the traditionary site of the Cross, says three times over: "And bowing His Head He gave up the Ghost." The impression was overwhelming. All present were in tears. I could hardly control my sobs. One seemed to *see* what had taken place there nearly two thousand years ago.

The little Community had a most cordial reception in the Holy Land. The habit of the Order made a very good impression; its graceful folds, beautiful colours and long choir veil having a certain affinity with the flowing Oriental draperies of the women of the East. The French paper *Univers* gives in its pages the following impressions of the new Foundation of Marie Réparatrice:

Among the latest news of the Holy Land, one is especially worthy of record, namely, the founding of a house of Marie Réparatrice at Jerusalem. It is said that the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament attracts crowds of Arabs. Every day the little Chapel is full of men and women eager to look on the Glory of the God of the Christians and the good French nuns. Morning and evening at

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Mass and Benediction, when the Chapel is full to overflowing, there may be seen at the door and in the street a great number of these poor people who, in spite of the blazing sun, remain to see and hear what they can of the ceremonies. Pure curiosity perhaps? But the curiosity of the simple is more pleasing to God than infidelity and error. We feel sure that our readers have by no means forgotten the momentous happening in Constantinople, when so many Mussulmen were led to the feet of the Madonna Féri Keni. There is most certainly at the present time a mysterious movement towards Catholicism in the East. Sympathy was general.

Father Blanchard wrote to the Mother General :

May the Lord deign to protect the new Foundations of the Society. Cork, Manresa and Jerusalem have arisen under a fortunate star. Jerusalem, especially, excites pious envy. Happy are those chosen ones who go to accomplish the work of reparation in those holy places, where it was begun nearly two thousand years ago by Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. But, for the consolation of those who, perforce, remain behind, Jerusalem exists everywhere, and Calvary likewise. Is it not so, Mother? Continue to inspire your daughters with your good courage. Above all do I desire this, and I send you my blessing.

Whilst fostering the Jerusalem Foundation, now for two years the object of her constant attention, the Mother General by no means relaxed her energies in other directions.

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The Society was prospering in Spain—that land ever fruitful in good works and generous enthusiasm. The Rev. Father Goberna, Jesuit Superior at Valencia, was most anxious that this town, so devoted to the Blessed Sacrament, should possess a Community of Réparatrice nuns. Father Goberna long professed a deep affection for the Society, and he thought with gratitude of the memory of its venerated Foundress. Often, with tears in his eyes, he would relate of the delicate kindness with which she had come to the assistance of the Spanish Jesuits when the Revolution of 1868 obliged them to take shelter in France. On the arrival of the fathers at Toulouse, Mother Mary of Jesus, at the risk of real privation to herself and her Community, had sent gifts of linen, bedding and food. Father Goberna never forgot her kindness, and was glad to have an opportunity of showing his devotion for her Society. Valencia had already furnished many excellent vocations, and it was very evident that the Society ought to be established in the town. Therefore pressing requests were forwarded to the various persons in authority.

In January 1886 Mother Mary of Perpetual Succour inspected a building which had been indicated as suitable to the Mother General, and began the needful negotiations with the Cardinal Archbishop of Valencia to obtain permission to establish a new religious house in his episcopal city.

She was very favourably received. Trials and

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difficulties, however, in their turn, as always, set the Divine Seal of Reparation upon the enterprise. In spite of many obstacles the nuns were able to open the Chapel and begin their regular life on the 19th December. The inhabitants of Valencia welcomed joyfully the opening of this Sanctuary of Adoration, in which the Blessed Sacrament was to be exposed. Soon, thanks to the general good feeling and the almost Apostolic zeal of Mother Mary of St Sauveur, Superior of the house, the various good works were begun and prospered in a most encouraging manner.

In July 1887 the Mother General paid a visit to her new family. She was thankful to behold the satisfactory beginning of the Foundation, but passed a somewhat troubled time in Valencia. The town was in a state of excitement, as a general strike was taking place. It was impossible to get provisions, and the noise of the exasperated crowd sounded like the roaring of the ocean. It happened that a near relative of a young Mother who had come to Valencia with the Mother General had been deputed by the Government to levy the unpopular tax which had so infuriated the populace. He was nearly murdered by the mob, but managed to escape. The Mother General was much alarmed, and caused the presence of the young nun to be most carefully concealed during the riot. Fortunately, excitable people soon calm down, and in a few days all was once more quiet.

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In those days the Society possessed three houses in Spain, in the towns of Seville, Barcelona and Valencia respectively. They may be likened to the grain of mustard seed which was to grow into a great tree and shelter so many souls, destined to further the Kingdom of God and develop the worship of the Holy Eucharist. By way of extending her Society in Spain, Mother Mary of St Maurice wished the three houses to be elected into a Province. The Bishop to whom she addressed herself, asking him to forward her request to Rome, was at this moment on a pastoral visit at Montserrat. The Mother General therefore directed her steps towards this celebrated shrine of the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by Mother Mary of Perpetual Succour and her Secretary. This pilgrimage was a very sweet experience ; it was rest in the midst of incessant toil for the good of souls and the Society in which her life was spent. With filial confidence Mother Mary of St Maurice placed in the hands of the Blessed Virgin all her hopes for the success of her plans. Our Lady of Montserrat nobly responded to the childlike faith reposed in her, and in three weeks' time the Province of Spain was formally constituted.

Providence certainly came to the help of the Mother General in all her enterprises. Her secretary, however, tells us, that none who had not lived in close relations with her could form an idea of the other side of the picture, with its manifold trials, personal sacrifices, ill-health, all endured

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with patient sweetness, which was all the more meritorious, as this self-possession, this wonderful strength of soul, were united to a highly sensitive nature. However untiring her zeal for the extension of the Society, one thought dominated and inspired all the others: that of the sanctification of her daughters. She judged the growth of Marie Réparatrice by the fervour of its members rather than by their numbers, and used every possible occasion of stimulating in them the vital principle of all religious vocations, namely, the Interior life. She often said: "The Interior life of the Soul animates our life of Reparation. Our zeal must be ever accompanied by the spirit of prayer and the supernatural element." To this end she resolved to solemnly dedicate her Society to St Joseph, begging him to become its Father Protector and Guardian, as he was, long ago, to the Holy Family at Nazareth. Mother Mary of St Maurice had always had a great devotion to St Joseph, and in her attitude towards him she departs from her habitual reserve. She was, as a rule, so silent about such matters that the words of Scripture concerning the Blessed Virgin might in all reverence be applied to her: "She kept all these things in her heart."

Every year, on 19th March, Mother Mary of St Maurice addressed her filial requests to St Joseph, in the form of little notes, and she always declared that her demands were granted.

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One such epistle runs :

Beloved St Joseph, I thank God for all the benefits showered upon you, and I beseech you, for the love and glory of God and Reparation, to intercede for us with Jesus and Mary, that we may grow in Their love and likeness. Guard our houses, but, above all, may we increase in the religious spirit. Beloved Father, obtain from God for me and all members of our Society great love, firm hope and ardent faith. Grant that we may be suitably established at Jerusalem. Expel the Turk and the Greeks, and may the Lord reign there in their stead.

The act of consecration of the Society to St Joseph had been arranged, according to Mother Mary of St Maurice's wishes, by the Rev. Father Sanguinetti of the Society of Jesus. He fully carried out all her wishes, and great was her joy when, on the 19th March 1888, she was able, in the name of all her daughters, to read this Act. None present will ever forget the dignified and pious tone and the deep emotion with which she performed this act of filial piety. Every year it is renewed in all the houses of the Society.

In the following July the Mother General went to Cork, where a modest little establishment had recently been opened. With what enthusiasm and pleasure she shared in all the inevitable privations and discomforts. For two reasons she particularly rejoiced. In the first place, to see

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a new altar erected to Our Lord ; and secondly, to feel the effects of poverty in the simplicity, joy and union always very much in evidence when a Foundation has recently been inaugurated.

Her presence was, as it were, the sun, illuminating and inspiring all around. On her return from Cork the Mother General at once left again for Spain. On 29th June had been opened at Manresa, a house which, after that of the Holy Cross at Jerusalem, realised one of her dearest hopes. She thus announces the event to her daughters :

I take this opportunity of giving you a piece of good news, which now can be made public, namely, the Foundation of a house at Manresa, the place where St Ignatius received so many graces. Here, at its very source, we should be able to imbibe the spirit of the exercises, which must ever sustain, enlighten and strengthen our life. The circumstances which have brought us to this favoured spot, and determined the Foundation, are really supernatural, and prove that great good will result to our Society. Let us then, dear children, unite in fervently thanking God, and let us testify our gratitude by our faith and devotion.

Mgr. Morgadès, the devoted friend of Barcelona, much desired the presence of the Réparatrice nuns in his diocese. He himself, preferring the Society to many other Communities, had offered them a site

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at Manresa. The Mother General eagerly accepted the proposal. The kindness of the Jesuit fathers was also of great value. They offered as their contribution to the Foundation the altar of the ancient Chapel of the Rapt. Manresa was indeed a privileged place, ideal for the opening of a Novitiate. The solitude, the locality, the presence of the fathers of the Society of Jesus, above all, the powerful protection of St Ignatius, were so many manifestations of Divine Will in the sight of Mother Mary of St Maurice. And God approved her choice. Fervent and numerous, the Novitiate of Manresa was ever a consoling factor in her life, and inspired her with renewed courage.

The happy development of the Society was to extend to Italy, which till now had for twenty-three years possessed only the Roman house. In 1888 an unsuccessful attempt had been made to found a house at Genoa. In the following year Mgr. Lanata, with Father Sanguinetti, came to Rome and informed the Mother General that a Protestant church, with an adjoining house, were available, and their interest in the matter decided Mother Mary of St Maurice to go to Genoa. A few days later the Foundation was determined on, and on the 10th May 1890 she had the great joy of seeing consecrated to reparation a church which had hitherto been a centre of heresy. How many prayers have since arisen in this Chapel for the return of our separated brethren to the true fold.

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In 1889 the Mother General had the great pleasure of visiting her beloved Jerusalem Community. She left Rome with her Secretary and another nun on 23rd April, and embarked at Marseilles on the 26th. After a wait of forty-eight hours at Alexandria and another of twelve at Port Said, they sighted Jaffa. A boat awaited the three Mothers and conveyed them to the hospital kept by the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition. The next day they left for the Holy City. In those days when there was no railway the journey was full of charm. Few travellers were to be seen, with the probable exception of some poor barefooted Russian pilgrims. In the evening, when they reached one of the stony hill-tops, which surround Jerusalem, the three nuns prostrated themselves in prayer. Silently, with deep emotion, they gazed on the Holy City, so imposing in her desolation. At the gate of the city two Sisters awaited them. What joy! What a sweet combination of respectful affection and maternal kindness in this first meeting. Another few moments, and the Mother General is with her little family, surrounded by hearts full of joy, happy and proud in having her in their midst.

She hastened to make a visit of gratitude and love to the Blessed Sacrament, and could hardly tear herself away from the Sanctuary where, near her Lord, she gave way to the intense happiness and emotion which filled her soul. Then the little

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Convent was thoroughly and minutely explored. As it only consisted of one story this did not take very long.

On the succeeding days the Mother General and her secretary visited the holy places. Conflicting emotions of joy and sorrow possessed her. Joy at being in these sacred places where the Word Incarnate accomplished the mystery of the Redemption; sorrow at seeing them profaned by Mussulmen and Schismatics. At the cenacle, so full of attraction for her, how terrible to find it impossible and forbidden to kneel in prayer. At the Ecce Homo and at Gethsemane and various other sanctuaries she could at least give free course to her emotions.

The pilgrimages to Bethlehem, to St Jean in Montana, and to Bethany made an indelible impression on her, but Nazareth, above all, attracted her. When on this pilgrimage she left Jaffa on 10th June and arrived the same evening at Caiffa. She and her companions were very kindly welcomed at the Carmelite fathers, which has shelter for pilgrims. The next day they proceeded to Nazareth. The journey was made more interesting by a companion pilgrim, an inhabitant of the country, who gave them all the information they desired. At Nazareth the sweet emotions of Loretto were experienced in an even greater measure. What a happy memory is that of the Mass heard at the little altar of the Annunciation

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on the spot where the House of Nazareth is cleft, as it were, out of the rock. How happy was Mother Mary of St Maurice in this holy place. She longed to continue there in prayer, but duty compelled a swift return.

The route by Cana not being very safe they returned to Caiffa by the same road, which was indeed charming, with its many memories of Christ and His Blessed Mother.

Whilst their horses made a short halt, Mother Mary of St Maurice and her companion rested in a charming thicket, and were plucking some flowers when, all at once, their guide excitedly urged them to get into their carriage. The two nuns could not imagine what was wrong. Suddenly they saw a great caravan of camels advancing majestically, and very soon they and their riders were occupying the thicket just vacated in time by the nuns. At Caiffa they were again most kindly entertained by the Carmelite fathers, who did all that was possible to make the time at Mount Carmel interesting and agreeable. After a short rest they sailed once more, and reached Brindisi on 19th June; on the 20th they were in Rome. Here all was *en fête* to greet them, but their stay was short, for in July the Mother General began the Visitation of the Houses of France.

A great sorrow awaited her at Pau, which place she reached in the end of October. Her mother, to whom she had ever been most tenderly

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devoted, died on the 25th of the month. Mother Mary of St Maurice's grief was great. Retiring to the Chapel, she prayed that she and all her sorrowing family might be resigned to their loss, and presently, strengthened by prayer, was able to calmly resume her accustomed place in the Community.

All expressed the deepest sympathy with their sorrowing Mother, and many suffrages for the soul of the beloved departed were offered spontaneously throughout the Society.

"How good God is!" exclaimed Mother Mary of St Maurice. "He gives *all* with a religious vocation, not only to us who are consecrated to Him, but also to our relatives. My mother has now much greater spiritual aid than she would have had had I remained in the world. This is an immense comfort to me."

Mme Goulet left to her children a beautiful letter containing her last wishes. It was religiously preserved by her son-in-law, and it so vividly shows where and how Mother Mary of St Maurice's noble character was formed, that we transcribe it in these pages :

MONT DIEU, 23rd May 1870.

DEAR CHILDREN,—I am not sure that I shall have time and strength to tell you how much I love you and how greatly I long for your eternal happiness. By one means only do we arrive safely in port after the long earthly pilgrimage. We

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must follow the commandments of God and of the Church, bring up our children in the fear and love of God, do good, avoid evil, forgive our enemies. God will repay us a hundredfold in forgetting our continual offences against Him. Let us try to give a good example, in ruling our house according to the commands of God and the Church. Never allow human respect to alter the line of conduct traced out for us to follow ; let us in all things be as God would wish. Let us have the hour of Death frequently before our mind's eye, and pray that we may expire with the holy names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph on our lips. Those who are privileged to thus fall asleep will certainly see God. Pray for me, dear children, and do not forget me at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. I hope that God will grant my daily prayer, that I may die, loving Him with my whole heart and offering to Him in expiation of my sins all my troubles and sufferings. I assure you, beloved children, that I shall watch over you and that I shall pray unceasingly that one day we may be all reunited. If God demands sacrifice of you and sends you trials, throw yourselves on His mercy and say : " My Lord, Thy Will, not mine, be done." He will help you, He will strengthen you, and you will experience the joy God gives to those whom He loves. My dear children, look after your dear father. May he be happy, may he see peace and tranquillity among his children. If, when God calls him, the ability to pray should no more be his, do you, dear children, take my place—do not delay with the Sacraments of our

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Holy Faith. If, on the other hand, he has retained all his faculties, speak to him in my name. He will not be distressed, he will thank you for the proof of your affection for him—for you are opening for him the Gate of Heaven. We must all meet there. Farewell, dear children, but not for ever. I embrace you and I love you. I beg of God strength and courage at the last. Farewell. Pray for me. I bless you.—Your devoted mother,  
O. GOULET.

To her who wrote these farewell counsels may be applied the words of Holy Writ: “She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also praiseth her. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates” (Proverbs xxxi.).

## CHAPTER VII.

RE-ELECTION OF MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE—  
GOD'S BLESSING ON HER HOUSES—EUCCHARISTIC  
CONGRESS AT JERUSALEM—DEVOTION TO THE  
MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT.

It was now twelve years since Mother Mary of St Maurice had become Superior-General of the Society of Marie Réparatrice, and she had bravely endured the burden and heat of the day, bearing herself nobly in adversity and prosperity alike. The Foundations of the Society during the last six years are a lasting monument of her zeal which no distance, no difficulty had been permitted to overcome. The energy of her sagacious prudence was inspired by the most unbounded confidence in Divine Providence.

In spite of her unceasing labours, she was ever alive to what would most conduce to the supernatural element of her Society. Her tender heart was the admiration of her daughters. It was well known that her kindness and her wonderful discretion went, as it were, hand in hand. "I have frequently," says one of her Assistants, "admired the charity and reserve with which she would discuss difficult subjects, only mentioning such of

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their faults as were obviously apparent." Her unselfishness and her great indulgence for others made her a model of charity. During these twelve years she had taken the greatest interest in the training of novices and young religious. In Spain she had established a new Novitiate, and also had established the "third year," which confirms and assures Vocations.

The want of the religious spirit in an individual saddened her far more than material losses or human contradictions.

"What is most regrettable," she wrote, "is that so often religious souls do not know how to accept all things in a religious manner. This grieves me much and most certainly causes profound sorrow to Our Lord."

Mother Mary of St Maurice was not satisfied by seeing religious virtues practised as a mere duty in a kind of resigned submission; she wanted her daughters to be strong, joyful, full of that enthusiasm which elevates others. "I want everyone to be cheerful," she says. "At recreation do all that you possibly can to promote this cheerfulness, which is so useful in keeping up the fervour and intense love of our Vocation. In all matters, aim at the spirit of Reparation; our joyful eternity is contained in this. May Our Lord be your aid, and you be ever ready to fulfil His designs. See that there is real charity in the house and silence and the spirit of willing poverty and the atmosphere of prayer."

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To belong to God in self-sacrifice, such was the ideal which she ever held before her daughters. "We must do all for God and be ready and prepared for any sacrifice and any suffering, so as to give what so many refuse to Him and obtain for these others pardon and salvation."

In June 1890 expired Mother Mary of St Maurice's twelve years' Generalship. In February she invited all the Superiors to assemble at the Chapter, during which they were to elect the new Mother General on 26th May. Cardinal Desprez presided at Toulouse over the election. It was at once evident that the unanimous vote of the whole Society confirmed by its Superiors was that Mother Mary of St Maurice should continue her charge. One of the Mothers in Chapter thus describes the memorable scene: "All in this great and important gathering was worthy of the occasion. There was no strife among us, all was serene and calm; indeed the blessed influence of the Holy Spirit was very evident. We, ourselves, were not singular in feeling this holy influence as the touching words of the venerable Cardinal Desprez proclaimed. 'Thirty years ago,' said he, 'your venerated Mother Mary of Jesus came to me to beg me to grant a Foundation at Toulouse. I was glad to accede to her request, persuaded as I was of her piety and of the merit of the worthy object of her undertaking. I have not been disappointed in the results. The Lord has blessed the Society which is the work

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of His Blessed Mother, and to-day I am highly gratified by beholding the peace and concord which exist within its borders. This election made in exceptional circumstances testifies to the favour in which the Society is held by God.'” The happy result was universally received by the members of Marie Réparatrice with joy and gratitude. It only remained that the election should receive confirmation by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

It was feared that owing to the Whitsuntide vacation there might be some delay, but Providence made manifest its approval of so much love and unity, and Mgr. Boccafogli, Auditor of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, conceived the happy idea of himself proposing the necessary formalities. Thanks to his energy the decree confirming the election was dispatched to Toulouse on 30th May, conveying as well to Mother Mary of St Maurice the blessing of His Holiness Leo XIII.

The Mother General, deeply touched by the affection of her children, bravely resumed her heavy tasks and continued to be what she had ever been, and what she was to the end, entirely devoted to her Lord and her Society. As we have before remarked she seldom wrote down the intimate secrets of her mind ; however, a few brief concise lines penned, presumably, about this time are in our hands. For those who knew Mother Mary of St Maurice these notes are not merely expressions

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of thoughts and desires, no, they are an epitome of a lifetime :

In the presence of God at the Foot of the Cross and under the eye of Marie Réparatrice, my Mother ; deeply conscious of the love of my Saviour, who only lived to suffer and die for love of mankind, I once again affirm that I desire, that it is my fixed determination, by God's grace, to perpetually offer up my life in union with the great Sacrifice of Jesus Christ Our Lord. I offer myself and my life then, gratefully and completely, and with His grace, all my works shall be for this intention of reparation. May faith, illuminated by love, love strengthened by faith, be my strength and guide till my last breath. May I always rest in peace beneath the eye of God. May I be filled with the love of Christ and allow nothing to separate me from His side. May I offer myself especially to my Lord as a victim during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. May I be enabled to control myself, not merely *outwardly* but entirely, so that I do not feel troubled by cares, difficulties, contradictions, overwork—in short by every annoying and torturing circumstance that may arrive. Let me be ever calm, peaceful, gentle, at once imitating Our Lord, consoling Him, and making reparation to Him. May I be enabled to do all in my power to uphold and fortify in the Society the religious spirit and that of Reparation. . . .

In July 1890, although she was suffering greatly from a sprained ankle and was altogether very far

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from being in good health, the Mother General, ever anxious to watch over the welfare of the Society, began the annual Visitation of her Communities. Her first stopping-place was Pau. Her gratitude and affection towards the Baroness de Brienens made her most anxious to be present at the benediction of the exquisite Chapel now finished.

“This is a really beautiful building,” writes an authority on architecture. “The boldness of design, purity of line, the richness of the altar, the beauty of the mosaics, and especially the splendid windows, which portray scenes from the Old and New Testament, together with the miracles of the Holy Eucharist, make it a precious jewel of Gothic architecture.”

Mother Mary of St Maurice was peculiarly capable of appreciating this little gem of a building dedicated to the worship of the Blessed Sacrament. She deprecated personal luxury indeed, but nothing in her eyes was sufficiently beautiful and splendid for the honour of the House of God. On leaving Pau the Mother General went to Paris and from thence to the Novitiate at Tournai, where every year she made a protracted stay. On 24th November she was once again in Rome.

In January took place the usual Novena of Reparation, which is offered in the houses of the Society as a public act of adoration and homage to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and many

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of the faithful take part in this Novena, proud of thus testifying their love and devotion. The Cardinal-Vicar had agreed to celebrate at the final Mass, and wishing to give pleasure to the Mother General and her daughters, he arranged that a ceremony of Ordination should be held on this occasion.

Twelve candidates accordingly received minor orders in the little Chapel in the Via degli Artisti. The prelate gave another proof of his interest in Marie Réparatrice. Knowing that the Mother General was planning the Foundation of a Community at Madrid, he offered to furnish her with letters of recommendation to the Papal Nuncio and also to the Bishop. Thus, circumstances seemed to favour this new Foundation, and with the help of influential friends and after many trials and difficulties Providence permitted the little Community to establish itself in the Plaza de la Villa on 1st November 1891.

The Rev. Father Vélez, celebrated alike for his piety and learning, said the first Mass. On placing the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle after the Consecration the father said to Our Lord: "Stay here till the Judgment Day," meaning that the Society thus taking root in the Spanish Capital was never to be banished from the land.

On the 13th of the month Mgr. Sancha, Bishop of Madrid, blessed the Chapel, which was thus opened to the public. The good Bishop also went

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over the Convent and was most interested in every little detail of the furnishing of the cells. Seeing that the nuns had only one blanket apiece, he next day sent thirty extra ones. After Mass Mgr. Sancha in the course of an eloquent discourse begged the congregation, which was composed of the best Society in Madrid, "to come to the help of this beautiful Foundation." Queen Maria Christina headed the list of subscribers for the maintenance of the altar lights. One day a month was to be devoted to prayers for the repose of the soul of King Alphonso XII. This first installation proved to be only of short duration. God raised up a generous benefactress in the person of the Countess Ribadedeve, who, alone, undertook to provide the site of a new Convent.

In 1894 she placed at the disposal of the Society a huge ancient mansion in the Calle Torija. This house became one of the most important of the Society, and later on a splendid Church was erected, the Countess of Ribadedeve proving a most generous benefactress to the building fund.

On the Feast of St Joseph this year of 1894, the Mother General, feeling that the rapid growth of the Society made it more than ever needful to evince her motherly care and counsel towards her family in religion, wrote an admirable letter to her daughters, from which we subjoin some few extracts:—

On the 19th of March, the day on which we

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renew the consecration of our Society and ourselves to St Joseph, I feel constrained to write to you, my dear daughters, in order that we may foster in ourselves the desire of imitating our holy Protector, and thus win his paternal affection. I want especially to direct your attention to his love of poverty. St Joseph passed his life on earth as a poor man ; he was frequently in want of really necessary comforts. My dear children, we should be unworthy of the Saint's protection did we not each willingly embrace the life of poverty, did we not submit to sufferings and privations, accepting gratefully the humiliations which accompany a state of poverty. We must follow in the steps of St Joseph ; above all we must imitate our Divine Master, who for our sakes became poor. We are profoundly grateful to God for all that He has already done for our Society, but it is plainly to be seen that all these benefits demand in response the spirit of poverty, the love of work, and the utter contempt of a worldly spirit. The word of the Lord is our very life, it is He who says : " Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice and all these things shall be added unto you." In following our Lord's command, we become living examples of the Divine Saviour ; by mortifying in ourselves all that is opposed to His Will we are, in a word, fulfilling the engagements which we undertook when we consecrated ourselves to His service. We have no right to aspire to the enjoyment of His benefits if we do not fulfil His demands.

Thus, dear daughters, I exhort you from my heart to great earnestness in all good works, but,

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above all, practise the holy virtue of poverty. Be vigilant and mortified. Show by your example that the Society of Marie Réparatrice, which bears Our Lady's name, is clothed with her robes of humility, poverty and self-sacrifice. May each religious look upon herself as the faithful servant to whose careful keeping God entrusts His treasure, and from whom a reckoning will be demanded. May all assiduously and devotedly accomplish the tasks laid upon them by obedience without self-seeking and the desire of their own gratification. Working thus together, mutually encouraged by generous and edifying examples, we may be sure that St Joseph will regard us as a privileged part of his family, and cause to be shed on us an abundance of spiritual and temporal benefits. I beg this favour of him with you and for you, my dear daughters.

Blessings were, at this time, multiplying in the Society. The new Foundations were increasing steadily, and the old ones grew so rapidly that greater accommodation was very evidently required. In Cork, especially, it was absolutely necessary to have more space. A large property, with a fine garden, was available at Summer Hill South, and, although it was rather far from Sydenham, where the Society was doing a great work, the Mother General, at the Bishop's desire, in view of the good that might be accomplished in a Protestant quarter of the city, decided to acquire the place, and the Convent was transferred to its new abode about the

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end of September 1891, after which the Mother General, greatly cheered by the march of events in Ireland, returned to London and continued her Visitations in England and France. In November she returned to her dear Roman house. Influenza was at that time raging in the Community. Many members were prostrated by the epidemic, and the Mother General was badly attacked by it soon after her return to Rome.

The year 1892 opened sadly. Mother Mary of St Maurice was still ill, and had been obliged to receive her daughters' New Year's good wishes in her room. This took place on a Friday. In honour of the Sacred Heart a little altar had been arranged with lights and flowers, and in an intimate and touching little ceremony the Mother General renewed the Act of Consecration, composed a few years earlier by the venerated Foundress.

Death, alas ! was hovering over the Community. On the 8th of January Mother Mary of St Maurice lost one of her dearest daughters, who had for long been a faithful Assistant in manifold undertakings. Mother Mary of the Eucharist had held the post of Mother Vicar during the three months which preceded Mother Mary of St Maurice's election to the post of Superior-General. Then she was made Assistant-General, and was held in deep respect by the whole Community. Her kind heart and all-pervading charity gained her friends everywhere, and she was loved by all. Her death was a great

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loss, especially to the Roman Community. The Mother General felt the blow keenly, the more so that the fatal illness was very rapid in its course, and that she herself, confined to her room as she was, could not be the stay and comfort of her dear friend on the threshold of Eternity.

Mother Mary of St Maurice's convalescence was long and tedious. She was just able, on 17th January, the Feast of the Holy Name, to assist at Holy Mass, celebrated as usual by the Cardinal Vicar, and she gradually regained her accustomed health. When Easter came, she was able, at last, to begin an undertaking which had long been in her mind—the restoration of the little Chapel in Rome. She had always bewailed the very modest dimensions of the little sanctuary and had longed to improve it, but, hitherto, circumstances had always been against her. Now, however, she was enabled to adorn the building with simple, graceful paintings, and the general effect, when completed in July, was pronounced to be very pleasing. The Mother General was much gratified, but her pleasure was extreme when, four years later, the Roman Community gained possession of the Church of Santa Croce. The Community migrated to the Via dei Lucchesi in 1896. Here a fine Church belonging to a Confraternity of Lucquois, and formerly the property of Capuchins, was attached to a large mansion. It was said that many Saints had lived there, St Felix of Cantalice

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amongst others. The Church dates from the close of the 12th century : it was rebuilt in a grandiose style in 1575 by Gregory XII. In 1631 Urban VIII presented it to the Lucchesi nation, and it was dedicated to the Holy Cross and St Bonaventure. In 1863, thanks to the munificence of Pius IX, the Lucchesi were enabled to restore and redecorate the Church. The architect, Virginus Vespignagni, enriched it with frescoes and adorned it richly in the 17th-century style. The clever artist, Hercules Ruspi, contributed a fresco, in which are depicted various angels chanting hymns in honour of the Cross to the accompaniment of musical instruments. The acquisition of this beautiful Church is an epoch in the Roman Community of Marie Réparatrice. Wonderful events date from this period. On 16th January the last Benediction was given in the Chapel of the house in the Via degli Artisti. It was a severe wrench to the nuns to leave the place so filled with memories of their beloved Foundress, but they bravely made ready their new Chapel, in which, on 10th January, was to begin the Novena of Reparation. At four o'clock, precisely, on the appointed day, the bells pealed forth, summoning the faithful to Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Many prelates and priests were waiting in the Sanctuary, and the nave and tribunes of the Church barely sufficed to accommodate the large congregation, in which were to be seen many of the Roman

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aristocracy. The altar glittered with gold and lights: all was ready for the Divine Presence. The Blessed Sacrament took triumphal possession of the new dwelling-place and the strains of the *Te Deum* ended this momentous day in the annals of Marie Réparatrice.

In the new house events occurred with amazing rapidity. During the first winter alone sixteen abjurations took place. One case was a striking testimony of the workings of Divine Grace in an upright, sincere soul. Mr H—— had come from Philadelphia and was a Unitarian. His wife had been received into the Church in the Chapel of the *Via degli Artisti* about a year before, having been instructed by one of the religious, and her two daughters had followed her example. Mr H—— left his family perfectly free to follow their religious convictions. He had even been present at his wife's reception into the Church, and had been greatly touched at the solemn, simple ceremony. He remarked afterwards to his friend, Count de R——, "I share in my wife's happiness; I envy all who believe. I wish I could myself believe, but I cannot. However, I will never disturb the faith of others." At the end of the year 1895 he said to the same friend: "What New Year's wish have you for me?" "I wish that you may become a Catholic," was the reply. Thinking that this was a joke, Mr H—— said: "Well, at least, tell me when?" "On 24th May, Feast of Our Lady, help

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of Christians, which this year falls on Whit-Sunday," replied Count de R——, and added: "If this really happens I shall consider it as a sign of my Vocation to the priesthood."

In the opening months of 1896, after the Community had taken up its abode in the Via dei Lucchesi, Mr H—— often visited the religious (Count de R——'s sister) who had prepared his wife for reception into the Church. He was much interested in the welfare of the Convent and felt that he would like to offer a gift in the shape of a magnificent monstrance to the Mother General in memory of his wife's baptism. "As it is your God," said he, "who is exposed in the monstrance, all eyes should be drawn to Him rather than to the various beauties of the Church." He, with the Mother General, further decided, after obtaining the necessary sanction, that the monstrance should be in the form of a cross, very appropriate in a church, dedicated to the Holy Cross. All prayed during the winter months that faith might be granted to the generous benefactor of Marie Réparatrice. In February Mr H——'s mother-in-law was received into the Church. He, himself, perceiving that she seemed no longer to find consolation in Protestantism had advised her to see a priest, and had even introduced her to a prelate known to him. The old lady came for instruction to Marie Réparatrice. Her simplicity and earnestness were the more touching, by reason

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of her great age. She was a Quaker and had never been baptized. Accordingly, on 9th February, Mgr. Merry del Val administered the sacrament in the Convent Chapel of Works.

Mr H—— sent flowers and plants to grace the occasion, but, when asked if he would not follow his mother-in-law's example, he replied that, though he was delighted to be able to add to the happiness of his friends, he could not himself become a Catholic. His wife continued to pray for his conversion. In the month of April she asked for a Novena of Masses at Lourdes, at Pompeii and at the Convent of Marie Réparatrice, and prayed very fervently through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and St Francis Xavier. On 7th May Mr H—— dined at a friend's house, where he met two English ecclesiastics. In return for this hospitality he asked them to drive with him, and they gladly accepted the invitation. On calling for the guests at the appointed time Mr H—— found to his regret that only one, the one he had liked least, was free to go for the drive. However, they started, and the Canon soon proved to be a very learned and interesting companion, so much so, indeed, that Mr H—— found himself asking for a definition of his two principal difficulties in the Catholic Faith, namely, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and the Divinity of Our Lord. As the priest gave the explanation light dawned on him and filled his soul, and, arrived at

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the Villa Pamphili, they stayed there for long conversing. When at length they parted grace had finally triumphed, and Mr H—— was a Catholic at heart. It was the closing day of the Novena. On his return he said to his wife: “This, after our wedding-day, is the happiest day of my life!” And when she, amazed, asked what he meant, he replied: “Because you have taught me to know and love the Catholic Faith, and to-day I have made up my mind to embrace it.” It is easy to imagine his wife’s joy.

Meanwhile Mr H——’s friend, Count de R——, was ascending the steps of the Scala Santa for his intention. Whilst accomplishing this act of piety the thought occurred to him that to obtain the desired conversion he ought to sacrifice any private judgment on his own Vocation to the priesthood and obey implicitly the advice of a holy Bishop who was a recognised authority in such matters.

Three days later Mr H—— went to the Convent to tell the religious who so loved his family of his conversion. On her way to receive him in the parlour, a little note from her brother, begging her to pray for him during the interview with the Bishop, was put into her hand. After a few short and fervent prayers the nun went to receive Mr H——, who joyfully proceeded to relate his experiences. During the interview Count de R—— arrived. “Well, what news?” exclaimed his sister. “All is settled,” was the reply; “I am to be a

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priest." "And I," exclaimed Mr H——, "am here to tell your sister that I have decided to become a Catholic." There was a pause of indescribable emotion and then Count de R—— said: "When?" "God willing, on the 24th May, as you foretold," replied his friend. Thus was the seal placed upon the Count's Vocation: he had received the wished-for sign from Heaven. The two friends repaired to the Church and together adored Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. On the 24th May, in the Community Chapel of Marie Réparatrice, took place the beautiful and touching ceremony of abjuration and of baptism, followed by Mass and his first Holy Communion. The priest who had been God's instrument in Mr H——'s conversion officiated, and all present were edified by the devotion and ardour of the generous neophyte. In December of the same year Count de R—— received Holy Orders in the Church of Marie Réparatrice, and on Christmas Day the splendid monstrance, presented by the new convert, shone forth from the High Altar.

In the year 1893 the Society of Marie Réparatrice had taken an important part in the Eucharistic Congress in Jerusalem. Pope Leo XIII, ever anxious for the return of the Eastern Churches to the Catholic Faith, and desiring to be personally represented at the Congress, decided to send Cardinal Langénieux, Archbishop of Rheims, to Jerusalem as Cardinal Legate. In February the Archbishop came to Rome to seek an audience of

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the Holy Father. During his stay in the Eternal City he was by no means forgetful of the little Community of Marie Réparatrice. He celebrated Mass in the Convent Chapel, and after assembling the nuns together, he begged their prayers for the success of the Congress. Afterwards, in an interview with the Mother General, the Cardinal insisted that she herself should certainly be present in Jerusalem, where events bearing so decidedly on the Rule of her Community, dedicated to the worship of the Holy Eucharist, were about to take place. His Eminence's words woke a responsive echo in the heart of Mother Mary of St Maurice, and she arranged to be in Jerusalem before the opening of the Congress. She, with her Secretary and another religious, embarked at Marseilles on the 8th April. They had a very stormy landing at Jaffa on the 17th of the month, and whilst the railway, now running to the Holy City, made the transit easy, the romantic charm so keenly felt by the travellers in 1889 was altogether missing. In the evening of the 17th they reached the new house in Jerusalem, then, as it were, in the transition stage of the little house of the early days of the Foundation, and the great Convent which, finally, thanks to Mother Mary of St Maurice, arose close to the walls of the city.

The nuns, having quitted their first abode, had, for the space of two years, been living in a house on the road to Nazareth, not far removed from the

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Convent of Our Lady of France. During their installation here they had been most hospitably entertained by the Augustinian religious of the Assumption. The new Convent, though it was situated in an almost exclusively Protestant quarter, was already accomplishing glorious work for the honour of the Blessed Sacrament. We will here give some passages from a letter addressed by Canon Legrand, Secretary to the Latin Patriarch and Chaplain to Marie Réparatrice, to the editor of the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*:

Reverend Father, I beg to send you an account of the Novena of Reparation which has recently been held in the Chapel of Marie Réparatrice in Jerusalem. Fears had been entertained for the success of the Novena. To begin with, the nuns had recently changed their abode to a spot right in the centre of the Protestant Mission, to the great disgust of the London Bible Missionary Society. The new house is in a street which until now has been the abode of heretics and infidels exclusively. Fifty years ago no Christian would have dared to walk down it alone; even two or three together ran a considerable risk of being molested. Again this year the weather has been extremely wet; it has been almost impossible to walk abroad in the ways of disconsolate Sion.

There were many other disadvantages but, thanks be to God, all is well, and with David we can exclaim: "The hand of the Lord is here; to Him be all praise and glory." The Novena has fulfilled the words of St Paul: "Every tongue shall

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confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is the glory of the Father." Men of all races came to adore the Blessed Sacrament and offer fervent reparation to the Heart of Jesus. On Sunday, in spite of cold, persistent rain and many other attractions in the city, the Chapel was full.

After other details M. Legrand adds :

May the Lord soon grant us a Church to replace our too narrow Sanctuary. We cannot be exactly certain as to the extent of the moral effect produced by the Novena, but many heretics and schismatics were observed at the pious exercises, and we are convinced that the Novena, recurring every year at a given time, will contribute largely to the establishment of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, manifesting as it does the Word of the Divine Master: "I will reign in spite of my enemies."

The Mother General on her arrival in Jerusalem was anxious that her Community should bear an active part in the Eucharistic ceremonies which were being arranged for the Congress. The Chapel, being too small for extensive celebrations, Mgr. Doutreloux, Bishop of Liège, President of the Congress, and the Directors of the Pilgrimage, kindly arranged for the holding of a solemn procession, in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, in the garden of the little Convent. This took place on Friday, the 19th May. The Cardinal Legate, who had a great esteem for Mother Mary

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of St Maurice, announced his intention of taking part in the ceremony.

Two beautiful Altars of Repose were erected in the garden, one being in the form of an immense cross, four yards high, adorned with golden rays. At the crossing of the arms an opening was left in which to place the monstrance. The procession was truly a triumph for the Lord of Hosts. Irrespective of the many clergy of the various ecclesiastical bodies of Palestine and Syria a considerable crowd followed the Blessed Sacrament. Turks, Greeks, Arabians and Mohammedans were there. The children of Sion, as of old, had left their dwellings to gaze upon the Divine Solomon, crowned by Holy Church in glory and splendour. Kneeling in an upper room the Mother General looked with deep emotion on the imposing sight. What joy to see her Lord and His glorious Throne, elevated on a shining cross above the City of Jerusalem, over which He had wept, and where He had shed His precious blood.

The Congress held on its course until the 20th May. On one occasion M. Legrand gave an interesting report on the Society of Marie Réparatrice, showing how singularly opportune was its establishment in the Holy City, and how it filled a hitherto existing gap. "All other Communities in the Holy City are," he explained, "occupied with the souls which have been redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus ; none

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have, as a direct object, the Actual Presence of the Lord, forsaken, outraged, despised, in His Sacrament of Love. At the very time in which God consoles His Church by the Sacerdotal Jubilee of Leo XIII, He plants in Jerusalem the Society of Marie Réparatrice. Is not the Holy City the chosen place for the work of Reparation? She is the City of the Cross and of the Eucharist. Marie Réparatrice is well placed here, within a stone's throw of Golgotha, at the Cross of the Divine Victim, with Mary His Mother, who stands weeping, praying for the salvation of the world. Jerusalem saw the great renunciation; it is fitting that the Lord should be here, visible on a glorious throne." The preacher went on to expound the aims of the Society, and concluded by expressing the desire that Perpetual Adoration in the Chapel of Marie Réparatrice should be the crowning triumph. The pious aspiration received a unanimous and enthusiastic response, and Mother Mary of St Maurice, with her whole heart, agreed to the wish expressed by the Congress. A few preliminary steps were needful, such as an increase of members, and a larger Chapel, and the Mother General was enabled to gain possession of a property situated near the New Gate of the city. Here it was possible to build a Convent and Chapel worthy of the extraordinary privilege of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The plans for this new building were made by one

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of the Mother General's intelligent and devoted daughters. The most experienced architect could not but admire the clever piece of work, and it was carried out to the minutest detail.

Six years later, on Christmas Day 1899, the day on which Leo XIII promulgated the Decree of the consecration of the whole human race to the Sacred Heart, Our Lord took possession of His new Throne of Love, whence from henceforth the Holy Eucharist, the greatest gift of His adorable Heart, was to be perpetually adored. No date could be fitter for the ceremony than Christmas Eve, that Holy Night on which Mary, for the first time, beheld and adored the Incarnate Word made flesh.

Cardinal Rampolla telegraphed to the Community the blessing of the Holy Father. Favours and graces abounded in this new abode of the King of kings. Here it may not be out of place to relate the touching history of a little Abyssinian negress, whose marvellous conversion greatly rejoiced the apostolic soul of Mother Mary of St Maurice.

The story serves to show how, even in the silence of the cloister, a fervent apostolate, united to prayer, produces abundant fruit. Little Scalla was about twelve years old when she was given as a slave by the Empress Taito of Ethiopia to Madame N——, a zealous member of the apostleship of prayer in the Convent of Marie Réparatrice

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in Jerusalem. This Madame N——, an Abyssinian likewise, was the wife of the dragoman of a Schismatic Monastery, which represented the Ethiopian Government in Jerusalem.

The only son of the dragoman by a former marriage had been converted by his stepmother and received into the Church in the Chapel of Marie Réparatrice. M. N—— and his son, having paid a visit to the court of King Menelick, were given many honours and decorations; and, finally, three little negresses from the palace were chosen as gifts for Madame N——. The dragoman, however, declined two of the girls, but little Scalla was so pretty and attractive that he accepted her. Soon afterwards, at Christmas-tide, the little slave was taken to the Convent by her mistress, and was enchanted at the image of the Christ-child in the manger. The nuns were anxious to know if Scalla were a Christian, but Madame N—— could not tell, and as the child spoke neither French nor Arabic, conversation was impossible. She evidently did not know how to make the sign of the Cross. Shortly after this a Catholic priest, who understood the Ethiopian tongue, came to Jerusalem and undertook the instruction of the little slave. He was delighted with her intelligence and quick comprehension of the Eternal truths. One day she had been told of the Blessed Virgin, who feels maternal love for all, and so when next her mistress seized a rod with which to punish her for

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some childish fault, she rushed to a statue of Our Lady, which was near at hand, and clasping it tightly, exclaimed: "You cannot strike me while I am with Her." Scalla was about to be baptized, when unlooked-for difficulties arose. M. N—— was appointed confidential adviser to the Prior of the Schismatic Monastery; his son, at the same time, became Abyssinian Consul in Jerusalem. To make a Catholic of Scalla at this juncture would in all probability mean the loss of worldly advancement, so it was decided to sacrifice the child. After a time, however, Madame N——, who was really a sincere believer, returned to her religious duties and Scalla's instruction was resumed.

She was duly baptized by the names of Marie Josephe, and made her first communion. Soon afterwards M. N—— fell into disfavour, and was thrown into prison.

The law of the land, permitting the confiscation of all his goods and chattels, Marie Josephe was called for in the name of the Ethiopian Queen. Madame N—— warned her little slave of the dangers she would be called upon to face; she entreated her to be ever mindful of her baptism and first communion, and to beware of all temptations against her virtue.

On 23rd August two Turkish soldiers came to take Marie Josephe. Resistance was useless. Madame N—— accompanied the child, and the

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soldiers, who were kindly enough, held out hopes of escape. Marie Josephe listened to them in silence. Presently she whispered to her mistress: "Yes, I will escape, but I will not return to you; I will go to the Convent." Madame N—— told the nuns of the child's intention, but it seemed impossible that she would be able to escape; therefore the amazement of all, when, on the Friday following, the little fugitive was discovered in the Chapel at six o'clock in the morning, may be imagined. She had only been a captive for twenty-four hours. She had been taken to a house of ill-fame, where, with great strength of mind, she had refused to undress and go to bed. Her room, fortunately, was on the ground floor, and she watched until, for a few moments, the door was left unguarded. Then she ran out and fled into the night, leaving her veil in the grasp of two soldiers who gave chase. Poor little lamb, pursued by ravening wolves! She at length found shelter and rest at the feet of the Good Shepherd in the Convent of Marie Réparatrice. The Mother Superior gave orders that she should be carefully concealed, as unpleasant consequences would arise were she to be discovered.

Very fortunately, the Sisters of Charity who happened to be returning to Alexandria, volunteered to take Marie Josephe with them. Jaffa was the first halt of the journey. Here, a Schismatic monk, the one who had claimed Scalla before,

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was watching the arrival of all trains, and when he perceived the young girl with her white-capped escort, he recognised her at once and pointed her out to the station master. The Sisters, meanwhile, had passed the passport bureau and were already in the launch which was to convey them to the steamer, when cries of "Stop the Sisters" sounded from the shore. They had to return and confront the officials. "Why are you taking away this negress?" demanded the commissionaire, and a heated argument began. Finally, the Sister-in-Charge, said: "If you insist on keeping the child, do so, but all the responsibility will be yours." The police officer was impressed by this remark, for he knew well that he might get into great trouble by seizing a child who declared she belonged to the nuns; also he, at bottom, much preferred the Sisters of St Vincent de Paul to the Schismatical monks, so, finally, Marie Josephe and her guardians were allowed to proceed on their way, and in due course they reached their destination in safety. The little waif became deeply attached to her new home, but she never forgot her first Mothers in Jerusalem and whenever possible, she sent them tender, loving messages.

It is pleasant to be able to say that happier days were in store for Madame N——, who had been so good to her little slave. Her husband was restored to her, and before his death she had the joy of seeing him embrace the true Faith. Did

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but space permit, numerous other instances of the marvellous appeal of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament might be cited. One, only, must suffice. A poor, miserable leper, one Easter Day, rushed into the Convent Chapel, imploring to receive Holy Communion. The affrighted congregation had already begun to take flight when the Mother Superior ordered the garden gate to be opened to the unhappy man. There the chaplain heard his confession, a little altar was prepared under a tree and, in procession, through the flowering glades, the Sacred Host was borne to the unfortunate outcast. He had, at least, one little moment of peace and joy in his wretched life.

Shortly after the Eucharistic Congress the Community in Jerusalem sustained a cruel loss in the death of Mother Mary of St Edmund, its Superior. She died on 3rd December.

A true handmaid of the Cross, it was fitting that she should depart this life near the site of Golgotha. Her funeral showed the deep respect of the Holy City for the Society of Marie Réparatrice. The Patriarch, the French Consul and the Custom-house officers sent officials to head the procession. Then came priests of the Latin Patriarch, followed by those of the United Greek Church, the Fathers of the Assumption and of Sion, and numerous representatives of all the religious Communities. The French Consul also ordered the flag of the Consulate to be put half-mast.

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The Mother General was much grieved at this sad event. She had recently returned to Rome after a long year's work. On her return to Jerusalem she visited Liège, where a new Chapel had been erected. Chapels had also been built in Madrid and Seville. In France, she beheld with delight the beautiful Church at Le Mans, which had recently been opened. Her heart swelled with joy at the honour paid to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

In her childish days she had grieved at beholding worldly luxury and pleasure as contrasted with Our Lord, humble and abandoned on His altars, and this feeling had grown as the years passed by. She rejoiced to see her daughters cheerfully embracing poverty ; she rejoiced even more when she was able to dedicate riches, so frequently misused, to the service of Almighty God.

At this period—a prosperous one for religious Societies generally—Mother Mary of St Maurice gave herself, heart and soul, to the great work of glorifying Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar.

## CHAPTER VIII.

TWENTY-FIFTH YEAR OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE—  
DEATHS OF THE REV. FATHER GINHAC AND OF  
MOTHER MARY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION—FOURTH GENERAL CHAPTER—FOUNDATIONS IN FRANCE—BELGIUM AND SPAIN—  
THE MAURITIUS—MEXICO AND PORTUGAL.

MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE was now entering on the twenty-fifth year of her religious life. To her this Silver Jubilee meant no cessation in her many duties, nor did she pause in her life of continual self-sacrifice. We, however, may be privileged to cast a glance backwards over these eventful years, before continuing our narrative.

The aim of the Mother General's life is to be found in two words which she often inscribed on the little pictures she gave to her daughters: "Love and Sacrifice."

It is more than probable that many who observed her, as she went serene and radiant on her way, fancied that she had already almost attained to the happy state of the Blessed in Heaven, and was no longer troubled by the cares of this natural life. This, however, was very far from being the case. Mother Mary of St Maurice had, like all of us, her full share of sorrow. Her

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calm and peaceful attitude of mind was the result of long practice in self-denial. Much had been accomplished during the twenty-five years, many obstacles had been surmounted, many difficulties overcome, and perhaps in the sight of Heaven the hidden virtues, which she in her deep humility so sedulously concealed, were but the least admirable. Her future life was to resemble the past. There were to be many difficult hours. Mother Mary of St Maurice was to pass through severe trials, and though her faith gave her courage to endure unto the end, her loving heart suffered many a pang.

The twenty-fifth year of the Mother General's religious profession was joyfully celebrated by all the houses of the Society, and on all sides tokens of gratitude and affection were forthcoming. Numerous gifts for the various Chapels were received in Rome. Above all was Mother Mary of St Maurice's heart made glad by the blessing of the Holy Father. She was deeply touched by the affection shown by all her children. Alas! a day of sorrow was at hand. The rejoicings were hardly over when she received the sad news of the death of her sister, Madame Louis Camus. The Mother General's grief was profound and lasting and evinced itself in pious prayers to Heaven for the dear departed.

When the summer Visitation of the French Communities began, Mother Mary of St Maurice

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finally decided on a Foundation at Bordeaux. On 3rd September 1894, with letters of introduction to the Cardinal Archbishop, she took the first decisive steps.

The Cardinal (Mgr. Lecot) was very gracious, and declared that he felt bound to accept a congregation which would be so great a power for good in his diocese. During the visit of the Mother General to his Eminence, another Mother remained in prayer at the foot of the statue of Our Lady, which is venerated at Bordeaux by the title of “*Mater Amabilis*.” It was felt by all that the Cardinal’s kindness was a sure sign of the goodwill of Heaven, and indeed, very shortly, thanks to many devoted benefactors and friends, three houses in the street named Lafaurie Monbadon, thrown into one abode, formed the nucleus of the new Convent of Marie Réparatrice.

On 25th October the Mother General and her Secretary assisted at the first Mass said in a Chapel within the enclosure. Three years later a pretty elegant Chapel in the Roman style was built and largely attended. The good works of the Society also grew and prospered. This Foundation which began so well was doomed to disappear before obtaining its full development.

In January 1895 the Society sustained a heavy blow in the death of the venerated Father Gin hac. The whole Institute of Marie Réparatrice mourned for the holy priest. He had ever been as an

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affectionate father to each and all, and he had worked untiringly for the spiritual welfare of the members of the Society. He had done more than merely assist the Foundress in drawing up her Constitutions; he had taught her daughters to esteem and love them and to practise them. For more than thirty years he had conducted the spiritual exercises in the various houses of the Society, and the nuns never tired of listening to him as he explained the true spirit of their vocation. Father Blanchard, who well knew Father Ginhac's devotion to the Society, writes as follows to the Mother General:

What a heavy blow, my daughter! We have lost a friend who has been a source of blessing to our little Province for more than fifty years. None worked harder to *found* Marie Réparatrice, and during all these years he has affectionately watched over it. He has been both friend and father to the Society. We shall indeed see him on earth no more, but we may feel certain that he will be with us in spirit, and we shall ere long feel the effects of his intercession on our behalf. I can write no more; let us say our "Fiat" and be resigned to the Will of God.

One soul in especial had appreciated the holy Father Ginhac—Mother Mary of the Immaculate Conception. She with him was responsible for the young religious during the exercises of the third year and the long Retreat. She had taken her first vows at the same time as the Mother

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Foundress, and had been one of the first promoters of the Indian Mission. She had ever been entirely devoted to her Vocation; never for one moment swayed by any authority other than the legitimate direction of her Superiors. She, at a moment's notice, obediently quitted her dearly-loved Mission at Madura and repaired to Port Louis, where a fresh field of action awaited her. She was, truly, a living example of the virtues which go to form a true *Réparatrice*. But a few months after the death of Father Ginhac she was called to share his great reward. She had hoped to pass away on 8th December, and, strange to say, the premonitory symptoms of approaching dissolution appeared on that date.

Mother Mary of the Immaculate Conception was a sister of Father Sucher, who had so providentially helped in confirming the Vocation of the Mother General, and for three years she had been one of the Assistants-General. Her loss was indeed a heavy blow to the Society.

The end of the 19th century was fraught with prosperity for Marie *Réparatrice*. Fifteen new Foundations were made—three in France, one in Belgium, seven in Spain, one in Portugal, two in America, and one at Rose Hill in the Mauritius.

To give a detailed account of these various Foundations would take too much time. We will merely attempt a rapid survey. The work of Reparation is not clearly understood by the

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worldly-minded, who despise the Holy Eucharist and the Cross of Christ, but let us reflect on the Words of the Lord: "I, when I shall be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." These words are surely appropriate when applied to the Blessed Sacrament, visible in the Throne of Love. A modern apostle has said: "To give the Eucharist to a nation which has it not should be the first endeavour of a Christian." We need but to consider the war constantly waged by the Powers of Darkness against Holy Church, and especially against Communities which devote themselves to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to convince ourselves of the truth of this statement.

We have already mentioned the new house at Bordeaux. The second French Foundation was at Rennes, and being in Brittany it was placed under the patronage of St Anne. All true Breton souls (and there are many such to be found in the fold of Marie Réparatrice) rejoiced over this Foundation. The pious and contemplative atmosphere of the ancient province seems so well suited to the calm of meditation and prayer. Alas! something of the melancholy which pervades Brittany from the very first overshadowed the new Convent. Rennes, one of the last of the religious houses opened in France, was the first to fall in the days of persecution now fast approaching.

In March 1896 the unceasing labours of the Mother General were for a space interrupted by

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the assembling of the fourth General Chapter at Toulouse. Divine Providence, as of old, presided over the assembly, and all present were united in love of God and devotion to the Society. A pressing necessity was felt for a formation of novices and young professed, who should be thoroughly grounded in the apostolic and interior spirit on which the life of reparation depends. This was very necessary in view of the rapid growth of the various Foundations, which required fully formed religious, capable of assisting others, and ready to proceed to any quarter of the earth indicated by obedience. Pope Leo XIII, in an audience, had recently remarked with emphasis to the Mother General: "Increase and multiply." Prophetic words! Foundations multiplied in very truth at the close of the 19th century.

On 15th October 1896 a temporary house was opened at Sinay, in East Flanders. It was soon replaced by a beautiful building, quite in the country, in complete and restful solitude. A splendid park, with fine trees, surrounded the Convent, which was the gift of a generous benefactress. Madame Goethals was devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. She had no direct heirs and conceived the idea of turning her country house into a religious Community. She completed her gift by the building of a pretty Gothic Chapel, elegantly complete in all its details. The monstrance, in especial, was quite an artistic gem, composed of

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solid silver and glittering with the generous donor's diamonds, pearls and other precious stones.

The third French Foundation was at Boulogne-sur-Mer. In 1898 a fervent Community of nuns, called "the Retreat of the Sacred Heart," had got into difficulties and had consequently been advised by the Bishop to unite themselves with some other religious Society to relieve their embarrassments and assist them in continuing their good work. Mother Mary of St Maurice was approached, and after serious consideration she consented to join the little Community to her own Society. She accordingly sent the French Mother Provincial to Boulogne to arrange details, and towards the end of September she herself paid a visit to her new family. Her presence rejoiced the hearts of all those who had so wished to be united to Marie Réparatrice. On the 25th of September, after a preparatory Retreat, the new Réparatrices renewed their vows, and on the same day their former Superior wrote to Mother Mary of St Louis de Gonzague, Bursar-General.

"Rev. Mother, permit me, after offering my humble respects and grateful thanks for the charming picture recently received, to tell you of my joy on this happy day, now that I am really a Réparatrice. We are so glad to belong to that highly privileged family, and to have been so kindly received and adopted. Our little ceremony was touching in its simplicity. If, possibly, the absence

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of the Bishop made the service less imposing, it was all the more tender and intimate. I expect you already know how kind all the fathers are. They all came to say Mass and visit the Mother General. I must tell you how deeply grateful we are all for our Mother's truly maternal reception. We are overjoyed. A weight is removed from my heart, and I wish, Mother, that you could behold the changed countenances of our Sisters. God has indeed been good to us, and I hold the firm belief that all will be faithful and truly in earnest. We already feel quite at home. From the first, I was impressed by the simplicity which reigns in the Society, and this impression grows on closer acquaintance with the various members. I truly desire, Rev. Mother, to be worthy of the *Réparatrice* Vocation and shall spare no effort in my endeavours in this respect.

On leaving Boulogne the Mother General visited the houses of Bordeaux, Pau and Toulouse. On 16th November came the sad tidings of the death of her father, who had expired after a short and sudden illness. She was naturally deeply affected by this event. Returning to Paris to meet her brother, she from thence, early in December, proceeded to Rome.

Spain had speedily responded to the wish expressed by Leo XIII. She had at the time of which we write already four new houses at San Sebastian, Avila, Valladolid and Vitoria respectively.

Three other Foundations at Jerez de la Frontera, Cadiz and Santander were now to be founded.

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The San Sebastian Convent had been founded at the period which saw the beginnings at Bordeaux. The Mother General, who wished to install the Society in the north of Spain, had agreed to a proposal to open a house at San Sebastian, but had not thought of actually clinching the matter until after the satisfactory conclusion of the Foundation at Avila, which was already begun. The pressing insistence of a Jesuit father, a devoted adherent of Marie Réparatrice, however, hastened events, and Queen Marie Christina was approached, in order to obtain the necessary permission from the Bishop. Her Majesty, with her accustomed cordiality towards the Society, accordingly sent, on 26th February 1895, the following telegram to the Bishop of Vitoria :

Hearing that the religious of Marie Réparatrice desire to establish themselves in the town of San Sebastian, Her Majesty the Queen has charged me to beg you to grant permission to this excellent work in which H.M. is practically interested.

COMTESSE DE SASTAGO,  
*Lady-in-waiting to H.M.*

The Bishop could not but accede to a request coming from the Queen, and sent at once a telegram of compliance. The very next day the Superior at Madrid left for Vitoria with the devoted Countess de Ribadedeva. At first the Bishop raised difficulties, but as the interview proceeded, he was fairly won over and ended by

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begging the Mother Superior to come as quickly as possible to San Sebastian.

The Senora Santo Domingo was the principal agent in the projected undertaking and was most helpful in finding a habitation suited to the very modest resources available at the outset. Two stories in a nicely situated house sufficed the pioneer Réparatrices of San Sebastian. It was a humble dwelling. Life was circumscribed, but kindly friends provided necessities for the little household. It seemed as though the holy Father Ginhac still, though no longer of this earth, kept his old interest in Marie Réparatrice. A young Mother, who had ardently desired to see the Society established at San Sebastian, had prayed the father to obtain this favour. Her prayer was answered, but at a heavy price. The young religious became ill and eventually expired, willingly offering to God the sacrifice of her own life to the prosperity of the new Foundation.

The Convent at Avila had a curious history and was as it were protected by St Theresa in a very special manner. Dolores Santiago, daughter of the Marquis de Casa Ulloa, had been a novice in the Carmelite Convent at Seville for seven years. She had not been able to take her vows, as the Revolution had decreed that religious Communities were neither to accept new members nor finally profess those who were already in the Convents. The moment of profession, so long deferred,

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arrived at length and a struggle arose in the heart of Dolores. She feared illusions. She suffered much the more so, that all her spiritual advisers assured her that her attitude of mind was a temptation of the Evil One. At this juncture the Archbishop informed her of the arrival in the city of the Réparatrice nuns. She begged to be allowed to see them, and a few days later an interview behind the grille was arranged at Carmel. The novice was made acquainted with all the details and mode of life, plan and rules of the new Society. All she heard more than satisfied her ideals and her doubts and hesitations vanished. She ardently desired to belong entirely to her Lord in the life of Reparation.

Naturally it was a wrench to leave the Carmelites, who so loved her and with whom she had passed so many happy years. God, however, approved of her sacrifice, knowing that her one aim was to obey His Holy Will. The new Réparatrice was ever devoted to St Theresa and obtained permission to employ part of her fortune in founding a Convent at Avila.

The Bishop, Don Juan Munez Herrera, willingly granted permission, and on 3rd November 1894 the nuns took possession of a house and garden at Avila. All seemed satisfactory till the following summer, when the walls of the house became unsafe. The Bishop came to the rescue, and for a month the nuns found shelter in his palace.

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Finally the Comtesse de Superunda, Lady-in-waiting to the Infanta Isabella, offered her house, in which they remained till 10th October, when they were able to return to the Convent, which meantime had been made safe. Five days later, on the Feast of St Theresa, the Bishop said Mass in the little Chapel. The Church proper was not completed till January 1897.

About this time a very happy circumstance was the occasion of the founding of a new Community at Valladolid. Cardinal Cascajares, Archbishop of the city, passed through Seville on his way to Rome and took the opportunity of visiting the Assistant-General of the Spanish Province, who was a connection of his family. During the interview she asked what his Eminence would think of an establishment of the Society in his own episcopal city. He seemed much pleased at the suggestion, and soon, hearing excellent reports of Marie Réparatrice from the Bishop of Avila, he begged the nuns to come to Valladolid as quickly as possible. The Mother Provincial accordingly, with her Secretary, repaired thither. The Cardinal received them most kindly at his palace, and advised them to buy at once, anonymously, a property adjoining the Church of St John de Latran. On the 5th May 1897, to the great delight of the Cardinal, the nuns took formal possession of the new Foundation (the Church had been given them by his Eminence).

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Whilst at Seville, during the month of October 1897, the Mother General was asked to visit the ancient mansion of the family de la Cueva at Jerez de la Frontera, which was inhabited by the two last descendants of the race. They had always wished to become religious, and that their old house should be a Convent, but reverses of fortune had necessitated parting with the estate, which had been acquired by Madame de Domecq. She was of a truly humble and generous disposition, and allowed the original owners to have their desire as to the disposal of the property, and she further requested that her name should not appear in business transactions. The good dispositions of the two aspirants were manifest, the house was very suited to conventual requirements, and the Mother General gladly accepted the proposal. In the following year the new Foundation was inaugurated, and Madame de Domecq's second daughter, who had entered the Society, presented it with the Chapel and a little adjacent house, which was to serve as a Retreat-house.

We must give a passing glance at the last three Spanish Foundations at Vitoria, Cadiz and Santander. They all had trials and difficulties to surmount; they all began their various careers under the shields of poverty and humility. They were little wonders of grace. In each case benefactresses appeared, who were indeed visible angels of God's Providence; in many cases persons who

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had been opposed to the new Society became its devoted adherents.

The progress of Marie Réparatrice was not confined to Europe.

A new Foundation was established at Rose Hill in the Mauritius in January 1898, and was called after the Infant Jesus of Prague. For long the Society had wished for a house in a more healthy climate than at Port Louis and St Denis.

The Bishop had interested himself in the matter and had made efforts to find a suitable locality. He, however, died before anything was finally settled, and the first Superior of the Mission, having now been made Assistant-General, bequeathed the heavy task to her successor, Mother Mary of the Holy Family.

After many trials and a temporary installation in a rather unsuitable house, towards the end of the year 1897 the nuns acquired the residence of a Protestant clergyman who had been suddenly recalled to England.

Devoted friends helped to arrange all business details, and Mother Mary of the Holy Family wrote as follows to Mother Mary of St Louis de Gonzague :

You will rejoice to hear, dear Mother, that the comfort of the new abode and the good air will soon re-establish the enfeebled health of some of us. All the pious persons of Rose Hill are glad to welcome us, all are eager to help, and gifts are

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pouring in. We shall have two altars in the Chapel and Oratory respectively. We have Sacred Vessels, various vestments, Communion rails and other gifts. We shall also have second - hand furniture, cupboards, etc. etc., so settling in will not be a very expensive matter. Our nearest neighbours are the fathers of the Society of Jesus, and the new Sanctuary is the actual room in which the Anglican Bishop used to preach. Deo Gratias. . . .

In January 1895 Countess Ribadeneva, who had already done so much for the Society, wrote to the Mother General to suggest a Foundation in Mexico. She sent a copy of a letter from the Archbishop of the Province to the Cardinal of Madrid, expressing a wish to see Marie Réparatrice in his city. The Countess was, as ever, eager to help, and soon she was more than ever knit to the Institute, for in the same year her daughter, Dolores, entered the Novitiate at Manresa. The Mother General seriously considered the Mexican proposal, and three years later she dispatched thither a group of young religious, Mother Mary of St-Sauveur, the valiant Superior of Jerusalem, at their head. The Mother General went on the tender to the steamer and stayed with her departing children until the very last moment. At the final farewell she could not restrain her tears, and wept as she returned to the pier. A friend of the Society who was present remarked later to a religious at Barcelona that he had been much

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touched by the emotion shown by the Mother General. The Mother, herself, wrote :

Yesterday I dispatched my five travellers to Mexico. I grieve at their departure ; at the same time, I feel comforted. The generosity with which these religious embrace the greatest sacrifices will redound to the glory of God.

About the beginning of the following year the nuns reached their new home. Owing to some oversight, nothing was ready for them. However, the nuns of the Sacred Heart showed great kindness, and from an unexpected quarter assistance was forthcoming.

Don Fèlix Cuevas, a rich Spaniard, who lived in Mexico, uncle of one of the newly arrived nuns, was touched at the predicament of his niece and her companions and very kindly offered his own flat as a place of temporary residence. Providence favoured the new venture and there were many good Vocations. . . . About this time, the Bishop of Puebla de los Angeles happening to be in Rome, begged the Mother General to establish a Community in his episcopal city, and he further promised to assist the enterprise, by presenting it with a Church, a house and the maintenance of ten nuns. The Mother General was naturally gratified at the offer, for she realised what strong support would be given to the already existing Mexican Foundation. Unfortunately the Cuban

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war prevented any travelling by Spanish vessels, so only three nuns were able to leave St Nazaire in the month of May, with the Bishop and some Mexican pilgrims.

Before going on to Puebla they visited the Sisters in Mexico, who were still in the house of Don Fèlix Cuevas. In August he very kindly gave a dwelling next to his own abode and built a little Chapel in the garden. Mass was said for the first time on 3rd December 1898. Soon after the departure of the nuns to Mexico, the Mother General wrote :

We have just assisted at the Holy Father's Mass and we have received a very fatherly blessing. His Holiness is much interested in our doings and is pleased at the extension of the Society. He considers the Foundation in the Mexican capital particularly important. He asked us if we liked the fine Church and large house, thanked us for our efforts on his behalf, and blessed all members of the Society, our various families and our benefactors. Three Mothers accompanied me to the Vatican.

A few days later, the Pope asked some of the Community to visit his celebrated gardens. He had intended to meet them in person at the Casino, but was prevented by bad weather. Dainty refreshments were laid out in one of the halls of the Casino and the guests were invited to carry home to their companions what remained over of

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the repast. Beautiful flowers, also, were given them, with which to adorn their Chapel.

Whilst the Foundations in America were spreading and prospering, Portugal was welcoming Marie Réparatrice.

In 1898 Mlle de Borja (sister of an attaché of the Spanish Ambassador at Lisbon) and Comtesse de Figueroa, Lady-in-waiting to the Queen, with other influential persons, had asked the Mother General to countenance the establishment of a Community at Lisbon. The Marquis de Pombal offered a Chapel with an adjacent house in a central position. This had been the property of the celebrated Minister who is buried in the Chapel. Mother Mary of St Maurice consented to the request, and in July she sent two religious to inquire into various matters. Her Majesty, Queen Marie Amélie, showed great kindness, and altogether the prospect seemed so hopeful that the two emissaries speedily concluded all business preliminaries, and thankfully installed themselves in their new domain.

“You have doubtless heard,” writes Mother Mary of St Armel, “that we are already in our future Convent. The walls are, as yet, bare. Mlle de Borja has found us a capital woman to do our errands; food is very dear. We are engaged in household matters and pay a few necessary visits. Lisbon is a fine town, the Tagus is a magnificent river.”

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The two nuns speedily perceived in the great wealthy city a great need of the work of Reparation. A later letter says: "There is much to do here. God is not loved in this place, but is held in contempt." In their solitude amid the worldly tumult the two nuns were not idle, and aroused kindly feelings in the inhabitants. The Queen, who was personally acquainted with the family of Mother Mary of St Thomas de Villeneuve, did her utmost to prevail on the Ministry to grant a disused Convent to the budding Community, but Her Majesty's kind intentions were, alas! frustrated. The winter was severe. Fortunately the Marquis de Pombal behaved in a very generous manner, and in April the new Foundation was begun in real earnest.

The new Superior, Mother Mary of the Visitation, arrived with a fervent little group of nuns, and on the 18th of the month Mass was celebrated by the Patriarch for the first time in the Chapel.

Mother Mary of St Thomas de Villeneuve writes:

Our house has just been opened in great pomp. The Patriarch said Mass in the morning and the Nuncio gave Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the evening. The Chapel was full. It is very pretty now that it is painted and altered. The house does what it can to look like a Convent and succeeds not so badly. The Patriarch declares that a madman must have built it. Out of forty-seven doors, only seven will shut!

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Everyone is very good to us, may all go well ! Her Majesty will soon visit us. She is so kind and interested. Yesterday we opened our school with seventeen little girls ; Sundays will be for little boys.

The language is a stumbling-block, but the Lord comes to our aid.

The good work grew and flourished. The Sodality of Adoration for ladies and the Association of Christian Sisters for young girls were especially promising. The Queen, after visiting the Community, offered to build a terrace round the house. All was promising.

Alas ! the happy days of labour and good works, during which the Society of Marie Réparatrice had given so many proofs of zeal and devotion to Holy Church, were drawing to a close ; love and fidelity were to be proved by suffering. When the storm burst the Mother General was, as ever, calm and fearless. Like a gallant captain, she guided her children through the dark hour, saving many souls and ever upholding the honour of her Institute. She was, in very truth, faithful to her Vocation.

## CHAPTER IX.

EXPULSION OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN FRANCE AND  
PORTUGAL.—NEW FOUNDATIONS.—DEATH OF  
LEO XIII.—ELECTION OF PIUS X.

THE close of the 19th century found Mother Mary of St Maurice the Head of a religious Society, the wonderful increase of which, under God's blessing, was due to her prayers and labours.

Her gratitude to Heaven as she surveyed her religious family may be imagined.

In Jerusalem her dearest wish was in process of realisation and Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament had been definitely inaugurated. On Christmas Eve the Mother General wrote joyfully to her children in the Holy City :

MY VERY DEAR DAUGHTERS,—the Peace of Jesus,—Full of joy at the thought that unending Adoration is to begin, there where Our Lord has given the chief proof of His love, I write to congratulate you on being the first chosen to perpetually surround Our Divine Lord with love and adoration. You are indeed highly favoured. All envy you, companions as you are of the Saviour in Jerusalem, surrounded by Jews, Turks, Heretics and Schismatics.

May Our Lord from His Eucharistic Throne shed His light upon these unhappy ones.

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We all thanked God when He deigned to grant us a little place in the Holy City near to Calvary and to the Cenacle, where we might adore the Blessed Sacrament and try to imitate His life of Reparation, there where the great Sacrifice on Calvary was accomplished. Our hearts are filled with joy and gratitude. Now that Divine Providence permits the perpetual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the Society of Marie Réparatrice in Jerusalem, our whole religious family unites in a general thanksgiving and communion. It is indeed a mighty stimulus to our fervour and religious perfection. Dear children, become more and more Réparatrices not unworthy of this high privilege. Raise your hearts above worldly nothings. Clothe yourselves with the wisdom of the Most High and imitate Our Blessed Lady. May humility, charity, poverty and self-sacrifice ever hold sway in the beloved house of the Holy Cross. But I must not preach. Our Lord will not fail to make known His desires. Listen for His Voice you will be living the life of Reparation. I join you in your Magnificat. I think of you constantly. I am with you in heart and mind during the night at the feet of our Divine Master. Dear children, I leave you in His keeping. I bless you and I know that your prayers will cause new graces and blessings to descend on the Society. Pray for your

MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE,  
*Superior-General.*

Not in Jerusalem only was the Mother General seeing the happy result of her devotion and zeal.

## Expulsion of Religious Orders

There were many new houses everywhere, and in the original ones the increase of good works was truly encouraging. The recently-founded Spanish Province was making rapid progress and inspired many fervent Vocations. The ardent faith of Spain speedily substituted beautiful Churches and spacious Convents for the humble temporary buildings. The good works generally were very successful. In Mexico also arose many Réparatrice Vocations.

In France the Society was growing and prospering. The new Communities with their pretty Churches exercised a beneficent sway, of which, even yet, the memory remains.

In the Novitiates of Toulouse and Boulogne a most promising and devoted group of souls was being trained to the duties of the religious life. All classes of society were attracted. Progress had also been sure and steady in England, Ireland and Italy. Alas! adversity frequently follows close upon prosperity. Trials are, we know, the test of true sanctity. Our Lord Himself did not choose a path of ease and glory upon earth. In France wicked laws were preparing and the most sacred institutions were to be cast down. All religious Orders were threatened.

It is their privilege to share in the trials as well as in the glories of Holy Church. They are one with the barque of Peter; they will never founder. The holy year was beginning in Rome. The doors of the four great basilicas were flung

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wide and a greater stream of pilgrims than had ever before been seen wended its way towards the Eternal City.

On New Year's Eve 1901, at midnight, the Pope celebrated Mass, and at the same hour, in all Churches, the Holy Sacrifice was offered. In all houses of Marie Réparatrice Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament lasted during the night. The new century opened darkly, a vague foreboding for the new era was prevalent.

The Mother General sustained two heavy blows in the beginning of 1901. On 5th January one of the oldest members of the Institute, Mother Mary of the Tabernacle, expired in Rome. She had always been devoted to Mother Mary of St Maurice, who had the sad satisfaction of being with her in her last moments. A few weeks later the Society lost in the death of the Rev. Father Blanchard, Rector of the Scholasticat of St Marie des Champs at Toulouse, a true friend and father. He had for many years been a wise and prudent director to the members of Marie Réparatrice, and he was deeply regretted, especially by the Mother General, who for more than twenty-five years had relied on his help and counsels.

On 1st July the law decreed the dissolution and disbanding of the religious houses. On the 16th March previously the Mother General, foreseeing what would occur, had written to her daughters as follows :

## Expulsion of Religious Orders

MY DEAR DAUGHTERS,—the Peace of Jesus.—  
In hours of suffering and danger it is a true mother's duty to call her children to her and do all in her power to protect them. I wish I could be with each individual of you to strengthen our mutual bonds and prepare ourselves for coming trials.

Divine Providence, which orders all things in a manner not to be comprehended by our feeble minds, could easily avert the threatening evils to the Church and the religious houses. Let us place our trust in Divine Mercy, our sure rampart against our enemies. We know that God, since the beginning, has permitted His Church to suffer trials. This is part of the scheme of salvation for the sanctification of souls. Our Lord's words are: "The disciple is not above his Master."

"If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; be of good courage, I have overcome the world." Our Lord desires that His disciples should share suffering and death with Him, and He assures them of the final victory, "be of good courage." I think, dear children, that we are at one of those solemn moments which presage great events, and it seems certain that the Evil One and his array are preparing a great assault against Christ's Kingdom on earth. What are we doing on the eve of the fray? We have pressing duties to fulfil in face of the dangers which threaten the Catholic world. Firstly, we must by our faith and love try to console Our Lord for the outrages He suffers, and then we must implore His mercy on the Faithful. We must show that we under-

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stand our Réparatrice Vocation ; our lives must be vigorously opposed to all the wiles of the Evil One. Pray for the aid of Mary, our Mother, and don her vesture of humility and charity. Let us imitate her in her love for Our Lord and our profound respect for God in her fidelity to grace by our exactitude in the accomplishment of our Rules, in her union with God by the purity of our intentions, our recollectedness, our observance of silence. We shall thus console the Heart of Our Lord and draw down Divine Mercy on ourselves and on others.

Our Lord desires that His followers should partake of the chalice of suffering with Him. We must courageously meet the coming evils. We must not nourish false hopes. The assault will be desperate. Our name, our aims, the homage we pay to Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, mark us out for attack. Let us watch and pray with Our Lord that we may obtain grace to follow faithfully in the Way of the Cross.

Let us generously practise self-denial and mortification. Each of you knows what she in this respect can best offer to her Lord. I do not indicate any special acts of mortification, for this is, just now, the Church's precept and we must, as far as may be, fulfil our obligations. Dear daughters, be generous to Our Lord, renounce self absolutely. Trample underfoot those little weaknesses which hamper mortification and the spirit of poverty. Fervour and real religious devotion will never accord with self-love and self-gratification. Prayer will arm us for all trials ; Grace

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Divine will protect us and will lead us on to victory by the way of perfection and holiness. May the Heart of Jesus make us more and more understand love and sacrifice. May we be strengthened in good works. I pray constantly for this grace and I bless you in Christ's Name, assuring you of my complete devotion. Your

MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE,  
*Superior-General, S.M.R.*

This letter was eagerly read in all houses of the Society, especially in Lisbon, where the nuns were already under sentence of banishment and had had to abandon their habit. The spite of a journalist named Navarro had aroused the fury of the populace against the nuns. This man's daughter had shown an inclination of entering the Institute. He was furiously indignant at the idea and published in the daily press a most virulent series of articles against all Religious Orders, Marie Réparatrice in particular. The crowds in public places began shouting "Down with the religious Orders," and the King, alarmed at the threatening aspect of things, was weak enough to sign a decree of banishment on 12th March. The Réparatrices, knowing Navarro's sentiments, were prepared for the worst, and sure enough, on the 20th of the month, the Governor of the city, escorted by his Secretary and another official, appeared at the Convent. The nuns at once sent to the Cardinal, who kindly came, advising prudence, and he sus-

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pended for the time being the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. On the Sunday following the closing of the Chapel, house, etc., was ordered, the religious habit was permitted within doors. Much sympathy was shown and many protests raised against the odious restrictions. On 27th March the Superior was told by the Head of the Police Department that she must leave, with her Community, before sundown. The nuns pleaded for a little more time and finally forty-eight hours' extension was granted. Next day the last Mass was said in the hermetically-closed Chapel. It seemed like the catacombs. Then, behind closed blinds, by the light of a lantern, the hurried preparations for departure were made. One section of the Community went to Bordeaux, another to Madrid. Two Portuguese novices, who might have remained behind, refused to be parted from their Mothers and Sisters.

It was a sad leave-taking. The scum of the populace insulted the nuns as they left the Convent, and police protection was necessary as far as the frontiers. Thus ended the House of Nazareth in Lisbon. It had had two years of existence. Affairs in Portugal went from bad to worse. It was at first hoped that the laws would be less stringent than those promulgated in 1883, but this hope soon vanished. The Government was entirely hostile to religion. The protests of Leo XIII were unheeded. The daily press insulted the

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Cardinal, and even attacked the Queen. Irreligion and anarchy reigned in Portugal, and the unhappy country was plunged into the miseries of civil war. The *Réparatrice* nuns were the first victims of many. The Plot of the Freemasons of Lisbon had had a great success, and worse was to follow.

In France, the Waldeck-Rousseau ruling, voted for in the Chamber of Deputies, and presented to the Senate, had been adopted before the rising of Parliament. The dissolution of all Communities was ordered, if, after three months' grace, they had not obtained Government authority for their existence. To obtain this authority it would be necessary for each Institute to submit its Constitutions to examination ; declare its means of existence—in a word, give itself up to the enemy. The plot was well planned ; the enemies of religion would avoid the odium of a wholesale eviction. The perplexity of all Superiors may be imagined. Opinions varied. Rome was silent, the Bishops were inclined to conciliate. Some advised exile. From afar, Mother Mary of St Maurice had followed events, and after prayer and reflection she decided that once the law was passed there would be no alternative to closing the houses of *Marie Réparatrice* in France. Before leaving Rome on her round of annual Visitations she went to receive the Holy Father's blessing. He was, as ever, very fatherly, and kind. "But," she said, "more

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diaphanous than ever. He seems pure Spirit, absolutely ethereal."

In Paris, where she arrived in July 1902, the law on the Associations had just been passed. It was the signal for the destruction of all such religious houses as were not recognised by Government. After many days of anxious thought the Mother General decided not to demand authorisation, and thus the closing of all the French houses had to be faced. It was a serious situation, and Mother Mary of St Maurice, despite her decision, hesitated before finally acting. She hoped for counsel from Rome, but Rome was still silent. At the end of July she went to Brussels, and was consoled and encouraged by the love and enthusiasm there, Mother Mary de Kostka, Provincial of Belgium, proving herself of immense assistance. At Liège, the next stopping-place, Mgr. Doutreloux advised a Foundation in Holland, and furnished her with letters of introduction to the Bishop of Ruremonde.

On arriving at this place the Bishop was found to be away from home, but his substitute held out hopes that the request would be granted. The Mother General returned to Paris with a lighter heart, and went at once to visit Cardinal Richard, of whose capability and piety she had a very high opinion. The Cardinal protested against the plan of leaving France, and said that the loss of praying Communities would indeed be a grievous misfortune. The Mother General, feeling more and

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more perplexed, decided finally to write to the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, and to abide by his decision. Her letter is as follows :

EMINENCE,—May I be permitted to respectfully salute your Eminence and to explain that, after receiving the Holy Father's blessing, I came to Paris to judge of the case of our Institute in France, and to decide on our attitude towards the Law on the Associations which is directed against the religious Congregations.

Since my arrival here the letter of the Holy Father to the Heads of Orders has appeared, as also the notification of your Eminence to the Congregations and the letter to the Bishops, all of which have thrown light on the question. Lawyers have been called in to examine our position, the opinion of learned persons has been taken. Some are for, some against, the demand for authorisation. We have constantly prayed that we might see clearly God's Will in the matter. Now, as the time of grace has nearly expired, a decision is imperative. After due consideration we think it wiser not to demand authorisation but to leave France. His Eminence, the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, does not approve our decision—he leaves us free, indeed, but he doubts the Will of Heaven in the matter ; and further he fears that we may lose very materially by this extreme step. He thinks, too, that the Holy Father will not approve, and that your Eminence's letter rather favoured authorisation. In my perplexity I beg

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a definite opinion. A sacrifice which means relinquishing our public Chapels, in which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, and giving up nine prosperous Communities, requires an assurance that God's Will is being done, or courage and strength would fail. I pray your Eminence to indicate my path to me. We are ready, either to ask for authorisation, or to leave France. Above all we desire to do the Will of God and to obey, implicitly, the Holy Father.

This letter was presented to the Cardinal by Mother Mary of St Jerome, Superior of the Roman house and Mother Mary of St Veronica Juliani. On reading it he said that he approved of the Mother General's plans, and at the beginning of September the official notification of the impending departure was read in all the French houses. There was general consternation. The nuns knew well that for many this exile would be an eternal farewell to their native land. Mother Mary of the Agnus Dei<sup>1</sup> was the first to fall by the cruel dispensation. She arrived at Liège at the end of September and died there on 15th October.

In Paris, at the end of the Annual Retreat, the Mother General herself announced the decision to which she had been forced. The *Réparatrice* nuns rose to the occasion and showed themselves to be worthy of their Vocation and their Mother. Well they knew what it meant to her, and they would

<sup>1</sup> *Une Religieuse Réparatrice.* Ed. Perrin.

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not add to her cares by selfish personal complaints. The friends of the Society were deeply distressed. For Mother Mary of St Maurice, herself, the grief of losing nine flourishing Communities was as nothing to the spiritual desolation which the departure of the nuns would cause to so many of the general public. She was heard to say: "Houses are nothing in the sight of God, only souls signify." A channel of Divine Grace was being closed in France: the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the good works, the Retreats, were to be exiled to foreign lands. On the 21st September the Community of the Rue de Naples met for the last time to offer congratulations to the Mother General on her Feast-day. By a curious coincidence St Maurice's Day this year fell on that of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours. A novice whispered, as she embraced the Mother General: "What a sad Feast for you, dear Mother!" "A Feast of Sorrow indeed, but very precious!" was the reply. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed and adored until the hour of Benediction. The nuns wore their habit for the last time. Canon Lapalme spoke a few touching words at the last gathering of the Association of Christian teachers, amid general emotion.

All departed during the two days following, the Mother General being the last to go on 28th September. She went to Namur, where a new Foundation was beginning. In Brussels, the Baron

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de Loë, grandson by marriage to Mother Mary of Jesus, had offered his mansion of Meehr to the exiles. It was found, however, to be too distant from the town to be suitable; still the Mother General was pleased and gratified at the kindly thought. She was soon obliged to return to Paris, and was warmly welcomed in the house of the family of Mother Mary of the Precious Blood.

The inmates of the houses of the north of France went to Belgium, those of the south to Spain, Italy and Switzerland. The Novitiate of Toulouse was transferred to Monthey, where a pleasing property had been acquired. The house was placed under the protection of Notre Dame des Ermites.

The Swiss Government, unfavourable to all religious Orders, especially disliked French Communities. An enclosed Order being above all obnoxious, the Bishop advised temporary abandonment of the religious garb, and that the nuns should occasionally go out.

The general attitude of the clergy was cordial, the Bishop extremely kind and considerate, and the inhabitants of Valais were sympathetic. The exiles hoped to be able to keep their hardly won shelter, but their hopes were doomed to disappointment.

At Florence a Foundation was opened on 8th December, under the patronage of Mary Immaculate. Mother Mary of St Maurice writes to one of her Spanish houses :

I am greatly consoled by the kindness shown

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to the poor exiles. We are one family and troubles strengthen the bonds which bind us. I pray that the Society may gain more than it loses by all this grief, for the spirit of reparation and detachment is the essential part of our Vocation. We do not follow in Our Lord's footsteps to amass worldly goods and to seek our comfort, but to imitate Him in His Passion. These troubles will cause us to put in practice many virtues which would not have come to light in happier times.

Mother Mary of St Maurice's thoughtful kindness to her daughters during these days of trial was untiring. She was never too busy to give pleasure to others and help to smooth their path. Nuns who had sisters in the Community were deeply touched when they perceived that the Mother General contrived that they should meet as they went into exile. "My sister and I," writes one, "came to Paris for a few days before quitting our native land. Our Mother consoled us with her sweet talk, and then we left for England. What was our surprise and pleasure when, on reaching our new home, we found ourselves placed in the same room, by the express orders of our Mother. We could not restrain our tears in thus experiencing her thoughtfulness, and at a time, too, when working night and day she was hardly able to find shelter for all her daughters. . . ."

There was a curious little adventure on the journey to England. Six *Réparatrice* nuns had arrived at Folkestone, and from thence were to

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proceed to London. A young Mother who knew English fairly well was at the head of the little group. She had been told always to ask directions of head officials and was implicitly obedient. Not knowing which way to take at Folkestone Station, she looked around, and saw, standing with others, a much decorated gentleman. She went up to him and inquired the way to London. The apparent station-master, in excellent French, waved her to the line. All the third-class carriages were full, so the young Mother returned to her friend, and explained the difficulty. Nothing could be kinder than the gentleman's manner, and soon to the surprise and delight of the nuns they were safely located in a first-class compartment. Naturally they were enormously impressed with British politeness and kindness. Some time afterwards it transpired that the "station-master" was in reality the King (Edward VII.).

In the preceding year during the month of November 1900 the Mother General was staying at Florence, and there chanced to meet a lady who had a great liking for the city of Budapest, and curiously on arriving in Rome she found awaiting her a letter from the Marquise Pallavicini Maylath, inviting her to take up residence in that very town. A number of ladies of Hungary were desirous of building a Church in memory of the murdered Empress Elizabeth of Austria, and they wished the Sanctuary to be cared for by a religious Com-

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munity. The Marquise knew and appreciated Marie Réparatrice and suggested that the Mother General should be approached on the matter. In April two nuns proceeded to Budapest to arrange the modest establishment placed at their disposal. Francis Joseph was deeply interested in the Foundation and, with the Archduchess Valerie, showed great kindness to the nuns. The Church was solemnly consecrated in 1901 by the Cardinal Primate of Hungary. An immense crowd assembled at a Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of the Empress, the Emperor and the Imperial family being present. The ceremony was extremely splendid. The Foundation was to abound in good works. Later, indeed, it became an Ambulance during the Great War, and the nuns tended the wounded while seeking to do good to their souls. Soon after these events came the period designated by the Constitutions for the Assembly of the Chapter to elect the Superior-General.

Mother Mary of St Maurice had been at the head of the Society during twenty-four years. She merited a well-earned repose, but her daughters could not bear the idea of giving up their dearly-loved Mother. The Pope, too, when Mother Mary of St Maurice asked his blessing on the coming Chapter for the election of a Superior-General, smiled and said: "The existing one will be confirmed," and he persisted in this

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statement, in spite of the Mother's respectful protestations.

The Society of Marie Réparatrice was overjoyed when on 9th June 1902 Mother Mary of St Maurice was confirmed once more in her charge. Faithfully did she respond to the Divine Call and to her daughters' trust in her. Her aim in life was to develop and protect her Society. She was anxious as to the state of affairs at Valais, and in July 1902 the novices of Monthey were transferred to Hastings, where existed highly desirable conditions for a Novitiate; space, fine air and quiet. All religious Communities were, in the end, forced to leave Switzerland.

During 1902-3 new houses were founded in England, Turkey-in-Asia, Spain, Malta and Mexico. Beyreuth was especially favoured by Providence. Priests of all creeds are frequently to be seen praying before the altar in the Chapel; their prayers, doubtless, find favour in the sight of Heaven and redound to the good of the Society. Valetta in Malta also obtained a Foundation, indirectly through Leo XIII. A few years earlier a Chapel with a small Convent had been built by a little band of ladies who were anxious to find a Community which would look after the works of various poor Churches, whilst carrying on Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The Marquise Rosa Apap Testaferata repaired to Rome to ask the Holy Father's advice as to which Congregation

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should be invited to Malta. The Holy Father asked the Marquise if she would faithfully follow his counsels, and on her replying that for her the words of Christ's Vicar on earth were the manifestations of Divine Will, said, after a weighty pause: "Summon the Réparatrice nuns and all will be well." The Marquise at once conferred with the Mother General, and on 8th December 1904 the house of St Paul was opened at Malta.

The houses of Newcastle in England, Guadalajara in Mexico and Malaga in Spain were all very successful.

On 1st June 1903 the Mother General had completed the twenty-five years' Generalship of her Society. She had been untiring in kindness and motherly care. She had done more than preach: she had stimulated and elevated her children by her bright example. All were anxious to show the love and honour felt towards her, and to express the profound gratitude of the Society to the beloved Mother. The Roman house spoke for one and all, and the religious ceremonies were celebrated with unwonted splendour.

At the close of Mass Mgr. Angeli, private Secretary of His Holiness, presented a beautiful painting of the Sacred Heart, inscribed with the words: "Leo XIII Pontifex Maximus to the Superior-General of the Society of Marie Réparatrice, 1st June 1903."

At the end of the happy day all joined in

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singing the Magnificat. Next day Mother Mary of St Maurice wrote as follows to her children :

ROME, 2nd June 1903.

MY DEAREST DAUGHTERS, — The Peace of Jesus,—My heart is indeed moved by the touching tokens of filial love which have been showered on me, and I must express my feelings to you. In the first place, I am deeply grateful to God Whose ineffable goodness forms the bond which so closely unites us, and to Our Lady who so palpably maintains the spirit of her Divine Son in our little Society.

I am more than ever anxious to consecrate myself to your welfare, your perfection. I deeply rejoice to see our little family fulfilling our Lord's command, signed and sealed with the mark by which He distinguishes His own. "Even as I have loved you," He says, "I desire that you should love one another." In our present trials, with an uncertain future, there is a sense of security in this spirit of love and union which I rejoice to behold. We triumph in Him who has loved us. Sufferings and trials, far from injuring us, will purify and strengthen us, will identify us with Our Divine Master, and cause us to realise with Our Lady our *Réparatrice* Vocation. The world needs devoted souls, ready to sacrifice themselves for God's glory and the good of their fellow-men. Let us all imitate Our Lady. In conclusion, dear daughters, I rejoice to transmit to you the paternal benediction of the Holy Father, which he deigns to send to me and to you all. The

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1st of June will be a day of sweet memories of the goodness of the Lord and the loving devotion of my daughters. Your

MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE,  
*Superior-General, S.M.R.*

Alas ! a very sorrowful event soon followed these joyous celebrations. The evening of 20th July saw Rome plunged into mourning by the death of Leo XIII. He was lamented by the whole of the Catholic world. Prayers were offered in the Chapel of Marie Réparatrice for the departed Pontiff. The great Pope had been consistently kind to the Society, and had shown his fatherly dispositions in many ways. He had been quite confidential during his last audience with the Mother General, and remarked : “ You did well to leave France without asking for authorisation.” Mgr. Bisleti, the Pope’s Chamberlain, said afterwards that never before had His Holiness been so decided in the matter. To the fervent prayers for the departed Pontiff were added humble petitions that the new Pope might be worthy of his great predecessor. On 4th August Cardinal Joseph Sarto ascended the Throne of Peter with the title of Pius X. He chose this name because all those Popes who had hitherto borne it had ever been valiant in the defence of Holy Church, and the newly - elected Pontiff hoped, with the aid of Divine Grace, to be faithful unto death, as indeed he proved himself, as the whole world knows to-day.

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Pius X, on the day following his election, sent a special blessing to Marie Réparatrice, and was consistently kind during the whole of his pontificate. When the Mother General and some of her Community were received in audience, all were charmed with the new Pope's simple, genial manner, and he interested himself even in minute details of the Society. In February an audience was granted to all persons concerned in the various good works of Marie Réparatrice. They were received by the Holy Father in the Loggia of Raphael. He conversed graciously with one and all, and all were deeply impressed with his fatherly kindness. He was especially kind to children, and even answered personally a letter which a little girl named Adalgisa Fontana, who was being prepared for her first Communion by the nuns of Marie Réparatrice, wrote him, saying that she had had an "inspiration" thus to address him. He sent her a blessing by one of his Secretaries, and also signed one for herself, her family and the nuns. Pius X was ever anxious that children should hold their first Communion in happy remembrance, and be faithful to their vows. His extreme kindness of heart never varied nor grew less during the eleven years of his pontificate.

## CHAPTER X.

INSTITUTION OF THE FEAST OF MARIE RÉPARATRICE  
—FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY—DEATH OF MOTHER MARY OF ST JEROME—FOUNDATIONS FROM 1904 TO 1909—RENEWED MOURNING—EXPULSION FROM BOURBON.

ON his elevation to the Papacy Pius X immediately showed his great devotion to Our Blessed Lady. The year 1904 was the fiftieth anniversary of the Proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and was celebrated by the Universal Church with all possible splendour. For a whole year the faithful, by command of the Pope, were preparing for the Festival of the 8th of December. On the 8th of each month a solemn benediction in honour of the Blessed Virgin was held. It was a specially dear anniversary to Marie Réparatrice, for in 1854 the Immaculate Virgin had deigned to signify to Mother Mary of Jesus her wishes regarding the new Society. The year of Jubilee was to be a joyful one for Marie Réparatrice, for the Holy Father, in his goodness, instituted a Feast-day in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was to be called Marie Réparatrice, and he granted, besides, the privilege of a

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Mass Proper for the Day and fixed it for 2nd May, the anniversary of the founding of the Society.

On hearing of the double favour, Mother Mary of St Maurice issued the following touching letter to her daughters :

MY DEAR CHILDREN,—the Peace of Jesus,—I rejoice to tell you of a great favour which has just been shown us. His Holiness has vouchsafed to sanction “for our Society” the institution of a Feast in honour of the Blessed Virgin, to be called “Marie Réparatrice.” He fixes 2nd May, the anniversary of the establishment of our Society, for the Mass Proper of this Feast. The Church thus confirms anew in a special manner the name by which our Society is dedicated to Our Lady. Our title so well expresses our aims and our purpose in life. You will remember that when our Constitutions were drawn up in 1864 certain difficulties were raised as to our title. They arose again when the Anniversary Mass was asked for, and indeed the demand was set aside as unsuitable. It is as though God had reserved the great grace for this year, the fiftieth anniversary of the Proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The coincidence of the favour of the Mass and Feast in honour of Marie Réparatrice with the fiftieth anniversary of what we may call the “conception of *our* Society” is a happy one. It is, as it were, a glance towards us of our Immaculate Mother, a mark of her favour and encouragement, a pressing invitation to persevere with her in our work of Reparation. There is no

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better way of demonstrating to our Immaculate Mother our filial gratitude than by uniting ourselves with her in the great work of Reparation. The reason of our being, indeed, is this, and the pressing needs of the world clearly indicate our path, and the task is not beyond our strength. Our Mother Foundress has indicated the way. Her admirable letters breathe the spirit which must influence our lives. We must forget ourselves in following the Divine Will. If we are loyal we shall be, with Mary, firmly knit to our adorable Lord. The minor duties of life will be useful in preparing us for heavy trials. Each Réparatrice should be eager to accept sorrow. Our very name means this. We are all vowed to participate in a greater or less degree in the sufferings of Our Lord. Our Vocation is indeed a high one, and we shall only attain it by prayer and union with Our Divine Master.

Dear children, be constant and fervent in prayer, and may the Holy Ghost sustain you to the end. May Jesus and Mary bless you and keep you. I pray for you constantly and I beg your prayers.  
Your MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE,  
*Superior-General, S.M.R.*

Great preparations were made for the Feast, so long desired, but before the 2nd of May the Society sustained a great loss in the death of Mother Mary of St Jerome, Assistant General and Superior of the Roman house. She died on 23rd April and the Society was thus bereft of one of its most saintly members. The Mother General

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and Mother Mary of St Jerome had always appreciated each other's qualities ; indeed the latter had quite a veneration for the Superior-General. Mother Mary of St Jerome had governed the Roman house with prudence, tact and deep humility, she had well deserved her heavenly reward, but she was deeply mourned and missed by the Society.

The Feast of 2nd May was preceded by a solemn triduum in all houses of the Institute. In Rome, Cardinal Rampolla celebrated the first Mass of Marie Réparatrice. The Mother General, in her kindness, wished that the poor should share in the general joy, so in each house a long table was set forth for either fifty young girls or fifty old women. It was quite touching to see the pleasure of the guests, and the Mothers were delighted to wait on them.

On 8th December the altars were again resplendent to do honour to the Immaculate Virgin. The gleaming lights and flowers were tokens of the love and adoration of the worshippers. In Rome, at the splendid exhibition of gifts in the Palace of the Lateran, were many beautiful contributions from all the Provinces and houses of Marie Réparatrice. The Convent and Church were beautifully illuminated on the eve of the Immaculate Conception and shone forth in the city, which was all bathed in Bengal-fire. Benediction was given by Cardinal Vivès y Tuto. He

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was accompanied by the members of the Spanish College, and several prelates remarked that the Church was like Paradise.

Five new Foundations of Marie Réparatrice were begun during the six months which elapsed between the day dedicated to the Society and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. New hope awakened and Mother Mary of St Maurice, who had so nobly borne her heavy trials, was eager for fresh fields of labour. Her Society was to her her Heaven-sent talent, and she was untiring in improving it, and never relaxed for a moment in her strenuous life-work. At the end of May 1904 a house, placed under the protection of Our Lady of Begoña, was opened at Gijon, and on the 5th of August of the same year Marie Réparatrice took up its abode in Edinburgh. At Havana the Bishop held a solemn opening before the arrival of all the religious of the new Foundation.

At Barcelona, on the day of the fiftieth anniversary of the Proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the house of San Gervasio was inaugurated under the patronage of Our Lady of Good Counsel. This Foundation owed its being to the generosity of the Juncadella family, who were good friends to the Community.

On 15th December Mass was celebrated for the first time at Maestricht. The new Convent is, with the town itself, under the patronage of Our Lady, Star of the Sea. The Mother General

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could not be present in person at the openings of all these new houses, but she was the moral force behind them all. St Thomas well sums up her attitude of mind: "Calm acquiescence of the existence of danger, courageous endurance of evils, mastery of self, restraining any excess of boldness, and by firmness warding off the assaults of cowardice." The situation of religious Orders became increasingly difficult. In Italy and Spain the suppression of all Communities, not recognised by the law, was demanded. Anxious though she was, the Mother General never lost courage; indeed persecution served but to increase her holy zeal. Cardinal Gotti had, at her request, been named Cardinal Protector of Marie Réparatrice in 1906. He proved himself a true father. The Pope, too, gave practical advice on the line of conduct to follow in these hard times, enjoining, above all, prayer and confidence in God. By way of a respite from her labours in Europe, Mother Mary of St Maurice now bethought herself of her children in the East, and herself visited Beyreuth in Jerusalem. She also went to Cairo, where she had been pressed to open a new house. She accordingly did so, in the year following, and the rapid progress of the Cairo Foundation (house of the Holy Family) surpassed all expectations. Marie Réparatrice has truly done much to further the Devotion of the Blessed Sacrament in the East.

1907 was to see the realisation of two projects

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which had long been dear to the heart of the Mother General. The first was the establishment of a new house in Northern Italy. The Cardinal Archbishop of Milan had wished to restore to the worship of God the Church of Our Lady of Peace, which had been secularised for many years. Mother Mary of St Maurice was approached, and after various deliberations it was decided to proceed with the new Foundation. The Church is a fine building, and ranks among the national monuments of Milan, and much gratification was felt at its restoration. A great multitude gathered on the day on which the Cardinal, with Mgr. Locatelli and many of the clergy, bore the Blessed Sacrament to the altar.

In the second instance an appeal was made to the Mother General to establish the Society in New York. There were, however, difficulties, as the Archbishop did not see his way to granting authorisation. However, the attention of the generous Countess Leary was drawn to the affair. She made up her mind to help the Réparatrice nuns to go to New York, and acting on her advice the Mother General decided to send one of her Assistant Generals, Mother Mary of St Veronica Juliani (a most tactful person) and another Irish Mother, who was also very clever at delicate negotiations, to ascertain Mgr. Farley's wishes.

The voyage passed pleasantly, and on arriving at New York they were most kindly received by

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Countess Leary. They hastened to the Archbishop. At first, relations were somewhat strained, for Mgr. Farley thought the presence of the two nuns meant the beginning of a Foundation without his sanction. However, soon all went well, and the Archbishop eventually proved himself a loyal friend to the Institute. As soon as his consent had been given Countess Leary provided a house and the maintenance of six nuns. The work of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament began at once, and so many were glad to share in the act of adoration that it was possible to have Exposition during the whole day. The little Chapel was opened on 2nd May with the Mass of Marie Réparatrice. After eighteen months, owing to the great generosity of Mr and Mrs Kelly, Mgr. Farley was enabled to place a large and beautiful Gothic Church and adjoining presbytery at the disposal of the Community. Later, the Countess de Langier Villars and other benefactors contributed largely to the improvement of the buildings.

Many new Foundations arose in the years following the date of 1906. At Palma, in the Island of Majorca, the house of St Alphonse Rodriguez was begun. Dublin saw the opening of the house of St John the Evangelist. At Murcia, in Spain, a nun of Marie Réparatrice offered to the Society a dwelling, which soon grew into a fervent Convent. In 1909 were

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opened the houses of Camaguëz, in the Island of Cuba, and of Bilbao in Spain. The first was the gift of Doña Catalina Jori. The second was given by the Marquise de Linares, who had come to live at Pau at the time of the Carlist risings. The nuns had prepared her daughter for her first Communion. The child died, and her mother founded the house in her beloved memory.

This was the forty-seventh Foundation during the Generalship of Mother Mary of St Maurice.

Three times yet was she to have the joy of extending her Lord's Kingdom. During all these years Mother Mary of St Maurice had grown in grace and was never troubled with her ever-increasing labours. One day a Spanish Bishop came to see her and warmly congratulated her on the progress of her Society. "It must be most encouraging to you," he observed. Mother Mary of St Maurice assented smilingly, and began to count up the various houses and members. "Dear me," continued the Bishop, "how can you possibly act a Mother's part to so many children?" "Oh," exclaimed the Mother, "I love each one as if she were the only one." The Bishop was deeply touched.

The Mother General, as the years drew on, had many sorrows to bear. Death visited the dear home of her happy youth, her much-loved brother George died in July 1904. In religion, too, many of the dear companions of earlier years and young

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nuns, as well, on whom she had set her fondest hopes, were no longer present to gladden her mortal eyes. Mother Mary of St Magdalen and Mother Mary of St Louis de Gonzague, both full of years and merit, passed away within a few years of each other. They were soon followed into the silent land by two young Spanish nuns at Madrid, Mother Mary de los Martires, and Mother Mary de la Virgen del Pilar. Whilst the former prepared herself with fervour to meet her Lord, her Sister in religion, unable to visit her as the illness was infectious, prayed that as soon as she had gained Heaven she should come and fetch her. The petition was soon granted. Mother Mary de la Virgen del Pilar, daughter of the generous benefactress of San Gervasio, was only thirty-two years of age when, on 9th January 1904, God took her to Himself. She was ever a deeply humble soul and seemed predestined to add to her Réparatrice Vocation by gladly accepting any sacrifice or humiliation. On the 7th of January those who were watching around the sick nun saw her raise her trembling hands to Heaven and exclaim: "Oh, the Blessed Virgin! how beautiful! Do you not see her?" She seemed entranced, listening to some sweet voice. The Mother Superior, with the mother of the dying nun, who had already bidden her an eternal farewell, were called, and watched the touching scene for more than a quarter of an hour; the mother, seeing her

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child thus as it were in an ecstasy, was soothed and comforted in her sorrow.

Mother Mary of the Crucifix, who died at Namur on the exact date of the terrible earthquake at Messina, was another elect soul. She offered herself absolutely to her Lord and bore a long, lingering illness with angelic faith and patience.

In May 1908 the Mother General for the last time saw around her the Superiors of the Institute in a General Chapter. Pius X granted a special audience on this occasion. He was then celebrating his Sacerdotal Jubilee. An exhibition of all gifts presented to His Holiness had been arranged in the Consistory Hall, and the Mother General with the Mothers of the Chapter were received there on 15th June. The Pope would not permit the nuns to kneel, and beginning with the Mother General, he blessed each in turn, saying a few kindly words to all. The Holy Father's goodwill was strikingly manifested on the day of the Beatification of Joan of Arc. He presented to Marie Réparatrice the bouquet which had been given to him. Attached to it was the following note inscribed: "Mgr. G. Pescini, Secretary of His Holiness, salutes the Rev. Mother Superior of the nuns of Marie Réparatrice and sends her, by the Holy Father's command, the bouquet presented to him for the Beatification of Joan of Arc, that it may be preserved in the Community."

The General Chapter being closed with the Holy Father's audience, the Mother General began the

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Visitation of her Spanish houses. To the end of her days Mother Mary of St Maurice devoted all the strength and time at her disposal to this important part of her duties. It was always a joy to her to contemplate the spirit of union and charity which animated the Society. Alas! perfect peace is not of this world; the Evil One is ever abroad and, if he cannot destroy souls and Communities from within, he can, at least, trouble them from without. Religious persecution was to extend to the French Colonies.

For more than forty-five years Marie Réparatrice had honourably existed in the Island of Bourbon. Since 1901, however, the aspect of affairs had been threatening, and finally in 1909 the Law of Expulsion was passed. There was a great outcry and passionate protests from the many friends of the Convent, but the little Community finally sailed for the Mauritius on the 19th of the month. The suppression of the Mission was a heavy sorrow to all the nuns, and in the Island of St Denis the grief was general. The exiles were warmly welcomed in the Mauritius. Indeed, the reception made a painful contrast to the scenes which had been enacted in Bourbon, and which were, in very truth, a disgrace to France.

One of the nuns gives details of the final scenes. "Nothing," she says, "can convey any idea of the kindnesses showered upon us or the grief of the friends of the Convent during these last weeks. On Sunday, 7th March, the various Sodalities

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assembled for the last time. All the members were deeply touched, and the sorrow of all was most affecting. The priests of the diocese came to bid us farewell. The Jesuit fathers, in particular, bewailed our departure. . . . Many tears were shed when, at the last Mass, the priest consumed the holy Species and extinguished the Sanctuary lamp. . . . When we left, the people would have taken out the horses and dragged the carriage, had not the Mother Superior objected. We were frequently cheered on the way to the station, and extra carriages for those who wished to go with us to the quay had to be added to the train. It left amid cries of 'Live religion. Long live the Mothers. Down with Bourbon!' Bouquets were thrown to us, and many poor women ran after the train as far as the Government buildings, where there were renewed demonstrations."

"Oh, what need have we of reparation!" wrote the Mother General, cast down indeed in spirit at these sad happenings, but not dismayed. "Let us pray fervently; let us entreat the Lord to sustain our courage, to raise up heroic Vocations and to hasten the coming of His Kingdom."

Alas! Mother Mary of St Maurice was not destined to behold the coming of the Kingdom during her lifetime. Trials increased as her mortal course drew to its close. Her love and faith were tried by much tribulation, and her soul was moulded more and more to the likeness of the Divine Model by sanctifying grace.

## CHAPTER XI.

TROUBLES IN CATALONIA — DEATH OF CANON  
LEGRAND—OPENING OF NOVITIATE AT TOURNAI  
—FOUNDATION AT MONTREAL—CIVIL WAR IN  
MEXICO.

ON the eve of the Mother General's departure for Spain disquieting news arrived from Catalonia. Postal communications were interrupted, and as Marie Réparatrice possessed three important houses in this Province, great anxiety was felt. It transpired, finally, that the nuns, though exposed to great danger, had been providentially preserved, but the future was dark and uncertain.

The Mother General writes :

All are praying for Spain. I have hope, there is still so much faith in that land. It is consoling to see how all are ready to accept suffering and sacrifice. England, Belgium and Italy will be willing to accept the whole Spanish Province. Do not fear to send any number, we shall find room.

Some of the revolutionary scenes recall the worst days of the Commune. Riots broke out in the last days of July, and in a few hours sixty Convents and Churches were burned to the ground. Insults were offered to the Sacred Species, to

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images of Our Lady and the Saints, even the tombs of the dead were despoiled. The house of Marie Réparatrice at Barcelona suffered many things; indeed the nuns were obliged to leave the Convent and take refuge in the house of Dr M——. The Mother Superior, who had remained in the Convent, came frequently to visit the refugees, disguised as a peasant woman. Finally, by the end of the first week in August the insurrection died down and peace was restored. San Gervasio also shared in the disasters. The Mother Superior wrote on 29th July that since the 25th they “ had been in a state of siege, many Convents and Churches burned and ruined, sacrileges committed, and bodies of nuns profaned and paraded horribly in the streets.” It was thought wise to leave the Convent. The novices were especially fortunate, as the Archbishop of Manilla was staying in the house which gave them refuge, and he was much interested and gave them conferences. The police of San Gervasio were a great protection and, indeed, the religious did a great work among them. Many of them confessed and communicated, and they presented a splendid Candle to the Blessed Sacrament. Manresa, also, experienced the horrors of revolution, and the nuns took refuge in the neighbouring Convent of the Sisters of Charity. They had to scale a wall, which was a difficult feat for the aged and infirm; however it was accomplished by eighty-three persons in perfect silence and with no mishap. The Mother

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Superior had meant to remain in the Convent with a very sick Sister, but the Mayor judged the risk to be too great, and the Blessed Sacrament was removed to the Chapel of the Sisters of Charity, who were more than kind to the Réparatrice nuns. After some poignant days of anxiety they, with thankful hearts, were able to return, and, in their turn, offer shelter to some nuns whose houses had been totally destroyed.

During these melancholy events in Europe the Mission in the East was making good progress. Its priests were real apostles. The house at Jerusalem sustained a heavy blow in May 1910 by the death of Canon Legrand, who had been its Chaplain from the very first. He was devotedly attached to Marie Réparatrice, and was very deeply mourned by the members of the Society.

In 1910, before beginning the Visitation of the houses in England and Belgium, the Mother General received the blessing of the Holy Father. Pius X seemed to forget his heavy cares for the moment, as he chatted with Mother Mary of St Maurice and congratulated her on the thirty-two years' friendship between her and her devoted Secretary. "Ad multos annos!" exclaimed the Pope.

The Mother General arrived in London on 31st July after having visited Florence, Milan, Strasbourg and Brussels *en route*. "Her presence among us," says one of the nuns, "is more and

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more appreciated. Her motherly kindness, her encouraging words, the interest she takes in each one, her absolute loyalty! The atmosphere of peace and love which diffuses around her animates our zeal in our Vocation."

The Mother General, on her side, was much gratified at the state of affairs in her Communities. Many improvements had been effected and the nuns were untiring in good works. It was all as the Mother Foundress would have wished, and Mother Mary of St Maurice was greatly pleased when a Bishop, who knew the Society well, remarked: "These nuns don't make much stir, but they do a great deal of good."

On 27th August, on leaving Limerick, it was observed that the Mother General gazed for long at the Chapel of the little Convent as she left the place. When she saw that her Secretary was noticing her, she said: "I expect it is the last time that I shall see this house." It *was* the last time. The "Ad multos annos" of the Holy Father were not to be lived on earth, and Mother Mary of St Maurice would see her English and Irish houses no more. She had, however, not yet completed her life's work; indeed she was busily engaged in planning a Foundation at Montreal, which proved to be one of her last earthly joys. Two nuns arrived in the town in time to join in the splendid gatherings of the Eucharistic Congress.

They had promises of help from Cardinal

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Vincenzo Vannutelli, the Holy Father's Legate, Mgr. Heylen, Bishop of Namur, the Very Rev. Father Bailly, Superior-General of the fathers of the Assumption, and Mgr. de Croy. Above all, the approval of the Pope was a sure warrant for the advent of Marie Réparatrice in Canada.

They had, however, to wait some time for a definite permission from the Archbishop of Montreal, Mgr. Bruchesi. He was assured by Cardinal Vannutelli that the Holy Father would consider the Foundation of a Marie Réparatrice Convent as a very suitable memorial of the Eucharistic Congress, and, finally, on 30th December, the Archbishop telegraphed to Mother Mary of St Maurice: "The Pope's desire gladly granted. I hope you will like your New Year's gift." A site was found for the new house at Outremont Avenue, Mont Royal, and Mgr. Bruchesi wrote the following letter to the Mother General:

REV. MOTHER,—Our Lord evidently desires your presence in Montreal. From the very first the idea of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in my episcopal city appealed strongly to me as a beautiful and touching memento of the Eucharistic Congress.

I should have at once joyfully acceded to your request had I not, during the past few years, been so frequently compelled to refuse permission to religious Communities wishing to establish themselves in my diocese. There was a certain amount of delicacy in the situation. Thus I thought it well

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to ask for direct advice from Rome, and the Holy Father himself has, through Cardinal Vannutelli, made known to me that he wishes your presence here. I throw open the portals of Ville-Marie. It is the city of your Mother and your Queen. The site of your future house is very fine, near to the spot where Mass was celebrated in the open air during the Congress. You and your daughters, Rev. Mother, may rest assured of my complete devotion. I pray that Our Lord may deign to bless the holy work of adoration and reparation that is to begin on ground which has been consecrated for many years. I hope, Rev. Mother, that ere long you may visit your daughters. You may rest assured of a very cordial reception from your very devoted in Our Lord,

PAUL, ARCHBISHOP OF MONTREAL.

The first Mass in a temporary building was said by Mgr. Bruchesi on 11th October. A wing of the Convent proper was habitable before the year was out. The good work prospered. The new Foundation had indeed been a happy New Year's gift to the Mother General.

A pleasing incident occurred in 1910. The Zouaves of Pius IX had always remembered the kindness shown to their wounded in the Ambulance of the Roman house of Marie Réparatrice during the sad events of September 1870. Before celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of their Foundation at Montmartre General de Charette came to beg for himself and his companions the prayers of the

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Mother General. He said he would be most neglectful did he not beg the prayers of the Society for those of his comrades who had fallen on the battlefield in Italy and France, or who had otherwise departed this life. He added that the Papal Zouaves would never forget how, in 1870, the nuns had cared for their wounded in Rome. Of these Captain Noel and Victor Crombé were still living. Burel died in the Convent Hospital, and many others.

One of the nuns, Mother Mary of Nazareth, had a son and four nephews among the Zouaves, and many of them besides had *Réparatrice* relatives.

The year 1911 dawned sadly on a world convulsed with human passions and violent outrages against Holy Church.

On New Year's eve, as the inmates of the Roman house came to offer their good wishes, Mother Mary of St Maurice said a few motherly words which were full of spirituality. "What I pray for all of you," she said, "is that your love of God may ever grow in strength and fervour. If we love, we enjoy, even on earth, peace and happiness, and hereafter we are sure of perfect bliss. May this year be to us one of love and sacrifice. We must be ready to sacrifice *all* to Our Lord. Be generous, then your path will be an easy one. With love all things are possible. Pray much for the Holy Father. The more he

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is persecuted, the more we should assist him with our prayers. The times are ripe for reparation. The Church is threatened from all sides; the Holy Father has already suffered greatly and he will suffer more. I know your hearts are full, but this is not enough. We must appease Our Lord. Let us be faithful to grace that no single sacrifice may be evaded this year. Let there be no self-deceit among us. Let us resolve to be faithful to the end. Do not falter; march onwards and upwards. I count on you!"

This year 1911 saw at Tournai the completion of a new and important Novitiate, due in great measure to the generosity of the Duquesne family, one of whose daughters was a Réparatrice nun. The situation of the house was very charming, practically in the country though near the town. The Chapel was opened on 1st of May. To the strains of "Sacris Solennis" the Lord entered the new Sanctuary and was borne to the self-same altar on which He was formerly adored in the Chapel of the Rue de Naples in Paris. All the nuns followed in procession, bearing tapers in their hands. The solemn services, the long white train of Réparatrice nuns, were beautiful indeed and some slight protest as it seemed against the insults offered to the religious Orders. Unfortunately, the Mother General was unable to be present; however, she arrived at Tournai a little later, was still there on the 22nd September, and the Feast of St Maurice was indeed a joyful one.

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When she left on the 30th, little did her daughters think that she was bidding them a last farewell.

In November she was once more in Rome, and was met by disquieting news as to her Mexican Communities. A letter from one of them gives a graphic account of the Civil War. Providence protected the nuns, and they were of great service to the Mexican Red Cross, and gave up their hall to be used as an Ambulance for the wounded. A Retreat was held for the men, and much moral as well as physical good was done.

The Communities of Puebla and Guadalajara had the same terrifying experiences as the capital. The Mother General was much disturbed on hearing of these dangers. She wrote that she was praying unceasingly for her children, and her prayers were answered. Divine Grace protected the Mexican Communities.

## CHAPTER XII.

### MISSION OF UGANDA—EXTRACTS FROM DIARY OF JOURNEY.

THOUGH the night was drawing in, there was no rest for Mother Mary of St Maurice. At length she was to see the realisation of one of her dearest wishes: she was to organise a Mission to heathen lands. She had for long ardently desired that her Society should bear a part in the toil and sacrifice of Foreign Missions.

It is the aim of Marie Réparatrice to do good in all countries and among all sorts and conditions of men. Various circumstances caused the Mother General to turn her attention towards Uganda in Central Africa.

For thirty-five years the White Fathers had been seeking to evangelise the people, and their heroic efforts had been rewarded. The Mission, which had at the outset counted many martyrs, had been the means of bringing many souls to Christ. The converts had been imbued with devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and love of Our Lady, and the arrival of the Réparatrice nuns was welcomed as a sign from Heaven.

After receiving the blessing of the Holy Father, and consulting with Cardinal Gotti,

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Mother Mary of St Maurice decided to send two nuns to Uganda to confer with the Vicar-Apostolic, Mgr. Streicher. She met them herself at Marseilles as she returned from a visit to Spain, and went on the tender with them to the vessel which was to convey them to unknown lands. They were very kindly welcomed at Mombasa by the White Sisters, the Superior of whom had, in years gone by, been a congregationalist of the Tournai establishment. The White Fathers have the pious custom of exposing the Blessed Sacrament whenever they are about to inaugurate a new Foundation, and they rendered this homage to Our Saviour for the Réparatrices, a fatherly welcome in very truth.

They reached Port Florence, *via* the Lake Victoria Nyanza. We give a few extracts from a journal sent by one of the nuns to the Mother General:

Sometimes the lake is very high, but for us it was on its best behaviour. The little green islands and the shores are most beautiful. The foliage is so dense that we were not able to land at Entebbe. Father Paul, Procurator-General of the Vicar-Apostolic, came out to us on a sort of moving quay, and took us ashore. We were driven to the house in a “pousse-pousse,” a little carriage drawn by negroes. We visited the various departments. The children all knelt as we passed, and one old negress called us “Mamma.” We had a beautiful drive to Hisubi, two hours from

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Entebbe. It is easy to know who are Catholics, as they all kneel as one passes. They are delighted to think we are going to stay in Uganda. It will be embarrassing if all the Catholics of Rubaga kneel as we enter the town! The children at the Convent received us with joyful salutations and hand-clapping. Our habit is much admired. The house is covered with thatch, and the walls are of bamboo. Food consists largely of bananas and mangoes. At Kisubi there is a nice Church, built by negroes, directed by a lay brother. The Sisters have a school, a dispensary, a workroom, and a hospital. Hospitals are a collection of huts, each for one or two persons. The people are very clean, and their chiefs have quite elegant dwellings.

2nd December. At Rubaga, some of the natives came to the Convent and asked the Mother Superior if they could see the beautiful beings sent by God (Us!). She said we were very tired. "Yes, I am sure their legs must hurt them," said one old man, who had never been anywhere but on foot. They were told that they would see us on the Sunday following. The Church or Cathedral is close to the Convent, and is very large. At all Masses, even before High Mass, two priests give Holy Communion. It is very touching to see the people prostrate themselves at the Elevation of the Host.

We have had a visit from the King's sister. She asked about you, Very Rev. Mother, and wanted to know if you were also "Mamma Salomé" (name of the Superior of the White Sisters). We said you were "Mamma Maurice."

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She begged us to give you her compliments and thanks for having sent us. Since her conversion she has worn no jewels and only claims one privilege, that of sitting on the floor in Church close to the Mother Superior's bench. Her little girl, Rosa, a pretty child, comes to the Sisters' school. She is more brown than black, like her mother. "It is well to be black, but not too black" is a native saying. We hope soon to visit the King, who is only sixteen years old. . . .

22nd December. We called on the Catholic Regent, the King's second Minister. The principal one, unfortunately, is a Protestant. Stanislaus Mugwanja is a fervent Catholic and did his best to become a martyr at the time of the persecution. Indeed, many of these natives would lay down their lives willingly for the Faith. The Holy Father recently sent Stanislaus a very kind letter and the decoration of the Order of St Sylvester. The English Government have given him and the King permission to wear it. He has a charming little Oratory in his house with a statue of Our Lady.

Our next visit was to the King, who is the son of Mwanga, who died at Seychelles some years ago. The call was rather formal. He is a Protestant and very closely guarded. We did our best in Ruganda and English. He understands very well, but would only say "Yes" or "No." We also saw the King's mother, who has the title of "Namasole," and is very powerful. The respect for the mother of the King makes the devotion to the Blessed Virgin very simple to the natives. Indeed, respect and deference to those in authority

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seem natural to them. They are extremely reverent, never speak before Mass, or interrupt you if you are saying your rosary.

To-morrow is Post Day. I hope we shall have a little line from someone. Two months is a long time to be without news. But fifteen years ago, the post only came once a year! It was a gala day; everything, except Holy Mass, came to a standstill. The fathers left the confessionals; everyone assembled in the chief squares of the town to hear the news. But the English have improved everything. The roads are really beautiful. Indeed, the whole country-side is like one great English garden. . . . After a whole week at Rubaga, we went on to Kīsuki, where the Sisters will be kind enough to put us up, until we finally decide what we are going to do.

At Entebbe a temporary house and garden were found, and the nuns were soon joined by four other missionaries, who came *via* the Island of Bourbon, but, alas! owing to the quarantine, they were unable to land, nor could any of their many friends come to them. Father Musat and Father Cléret of the Society of Jesus had made quite a journey with the object of seeing the nuns, and the disappointment was very great; however the happy reunion at Entebbe made up for much, and the work for God in Uganda was joyfully undertaken. Mgr. Streicher wrote as follows to Mother Mary of St Maurice :

VERY REV. MOTHER,—Your messengers, Mother Mary of the Holy Angels and Mother

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Mary of St Andrew, will have informed you of my pleasure at your proposal of placing a Foundation of Marie Réparatrice in my Mission. I should like you to read a passage of a letter which I have to-day sent to his Eminence, Cardinal Gotti : “ In October 1912 two nuns of Marie Réparatrice, sent here by their Superior-General, and furnished with a letter of recommendation from your Eminence, begged to be allowed to found a house of their Order at Entebbe. We were much edified at the thought of having in our midst these holy religious, who would offer their many vigils and privations in expiation of the sins of Christendom. I trust these two nuns are but the pioneers of a numerous Congregation.” What a beautiful life is that of your venerated Foundress, of which you have been good enough to send me an account. I have read it with great interest, and it has increased my admiration for your spiritual daughters. I hope soon to visit them at their house at Entebbe. I beg you, Rev. Mother, to rest assured of my fatherly interest and of my deep esteem. HENRY STREICHER.

This letter, and the diary from which it is quoted, were among the last pleasures on earth for Mother Mary of St Maurice. She did not live to see the little Community take up its abode in the new Convent. There was plenty of work. The study of the language was the first difficulty to overcome.

The Vicar-Apostolic remarked, when he came to Rome in 1915 : “ Missionaries are plenty ; it is prayerful souls that are scarce.” Nothing will prosper without prayer.

## CHAPTER XIII.

PROCESS OF INQUIRY FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF  
THE CAUSE OF THE BEATIFICATION OF MOTHER  
MARY OF JESUS — ILLNESS AND DEATH OF  
MOTHER MARY OF ST MAURICE.

THERE yet remained one last task before Mother Mary of St Maurice quitted her beloved Community for ever.

She had, as we have seen, ever felt deep veneration for her predecessor, the Mother Foundress, and it was the Will of God that she should take the initiative in the introduction of the cause of the Beatification of Mother Mary of Jesus.

The process of inquiry as to the reputation of holiness, the virtues and the miracles of the servant of God, began on 16th April 1913, before the Diocesan of Liége. Sixteen witnesses, one of whom was the Baroness d'Hooghvoorst, daughter-in-law of the Mother Foundress, were sworn in on the very first day of the proceedings before the Ecclesiastical Tribunal.

Mother Mary of St Maurice and the Society, generally, were much gratified at the opening of the inquiry. She, especially, who had for so long ardently desired this honour for her venerated predecessor, was overjoyed, little dreaming how

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quickly the sands of her own life were running out.

For about two years it had been rumoured that the Mother General's health was not what it should be, but she was so energetic and so uncomplaining that it was not realised that she was seriously ill. At last, on Wednesday, in Holy Week, 19th March 1913, she told her Secretary and the Infirmarian, that she feared that she had symptoms of a malignant tumour.

The two Mothers were much alarmed and a consultation at once took place.

The doctor was reassuring, but soon all prescribed remedies lost their effects. Mother Mary of St Maurice made light of her sufferings, went on with her many duties and generally preserved her peaceful calm and unruffled serenity. She placed herself entirely in God's hands, neither fearing nor desiring death. All her energies were concentrated on the Beatification of the Mother Foundress. She may have realised that her days were numbered; in any case she was deeply anxious to see this crowning of her life-work. In the beginning of the year she decided to go to Belgium, thinking it would be more easy there to follow the process of the inquiry and give her depositions as witness. Several Mothers, bent on the same errand, were to meet her there. On 8th May she bade farewell to her dear Community. All her children were for the last time gathered around

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her. She begged them to “quickly become holy, for,” she added, as though aware of the impending separation, “the time is short.” She first betook herself to Paris, with her Secretary, the Infirmarian and another nun. The journey tried her greatly, and all were much alarmed and implored her to submit to another consultation. The doctors found the case extremely grave and said immediate operation was imperative. After a slight natural shrinking the beloved invalid consented, murmuring: “It is God’s will, I must submit.”

The operation was fixed for 22nd May, Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. Many Masses were said and from all the houses of the Institute came assurances of prayers and sacrifices for the preservation of the precious life. On the eve of the 22nd came a telegram from the Holy Father, promising a special memento at his Mass next day. This greatly cheered and comforted the Mother General, and she was also very grateful for the efforts of two Jesuit fathers who attended her while she was in the Nursing Home. One of them, Father du Reau, said afterwards, on hearing of her death: “I consider it a special favour of Providence to have been able to aid and soothe your venerated Mother at the beginning of her fatal illness. I saw with admiration the beauty of this soul, so imbued with the Divine Spirit, so submissive, so brave in suffering.”

The night before the operation was to take

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place the surgeon suggested a narcotic, but Mother Mary of St Maurice declined it, and so calm and collected was she that when early next morning her Secretary came to make all ready for the reception of Holy Communion, she smiled brightly and said that she had had a good night. Her serene attitude edified and sustained all around her. After slowly making the sign of the Cross she was absolutely passive in the hands of the surgeons and nurses.

The operation appeared, at first, to be successful. The very next day, permission having arrived from Rome, she was able to receive Holy Communion as Viaticum ; indeed each day she was thus sustained and comforted. On the 11th of June she was able, once more, to be with her children, and for a short time they hoped that she might be spared to them. Alas ! these fond hopes were doomed to disappointment. Her strength began to fail and a painful inflammation of the mouth set in, which rendered the taking of any form of nourishment very difficult.

It was resolved to try country air, and the invalid was induced to go to one of the Community Retreat houses. She had hoped to make there the spiritual exercises with her daughters, but she was too ill to do so and grew rapidly worse. In spite of her suffering she never lost interest in the inquiry as to the Beatification of the Mother Foundress. Very soon after the operation she wrote to the

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President of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, begging him to receive her testimony before the beginning of the Vacation, and the swearing in of herself and the persons she had named as witnesses was finally fixed for 31st July. She was determined to be there. "I will go to Liége," she declared; "afterwards all will be as God wills." The journey was terribly exhausting, and her Secretary tells how sad it was to see the change in her face. Nevertheless, when she arrived on 29th July she was cheerful and composed and able to greet the Community with her accustomed charm.

On 31st July, Feast of St Ignatius Loyola, she, with Countess Henriette d'Outremont and various nuns, were sworn in before the Tribunal. On 7th August she was called as a witness. The proceedings lasted for three hours in the morning and two in the afternoon. When all was over her look of serene content was very remarkable. Indeed that day ended her earthly toil. She had done with the cares and labours of this world; she now had but to prepare her soul for the end. Hours of mortal sickness, so distressing to weak human nature, are scenes of triumph for real saintliness, which expands in conditions which are too hard for lesser degrees of virtue. A Christian writer<sup>1</sup> has observed :

If our true home is in Heaven, our descent towards the grave is, at the same time, an ascend-

<sup>1</sup> Mme Swetchine.

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ing. Body and soul are ever at variance. At the close of life death indeed is at hand, but so, too, are liberty and glory, which are more and more manifest as the mortal part is absorbed in the spiritual.

Mother Mary of St Maurice was motherly and kind and tender. As she went down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death she was the living epitome of the text: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land."

For a little time she was able to walk in the garden, and would look in at the kitchen windows and smile and chat with the good Sisters there. But soon this was too much. "You see," she said one day to the Infirmarian who was trying to give her some little ease, "it is all of no use." Towards the end of August she was very much worse, and to go to Tournai, as had been her intention, was manifestly impossible. "Perhaps," said the Mother General to her dear companion Secretary, "it may be the Will of Heaven that I should end my days here." These words, so gently and calmly uttered, were intended to prepare her friend for her great sorrow. From the day on which Mother Mary of St Maurice had assumed the heavy responsibility of the Generalship of the Order, these two had never been parted. After thirty-five years of intimate and sweet companionship, it is not possible to bid farewell for ever in this world without feelings of unutterable grief.

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On 12th September the Mother General saw one of her nieces, and a few days later her sister-in-law visited her. She rapidly grew weaker, and her doctor intimated that the moment for the reception of the Last Sacraments was at hand. She had already desired them, and was perfectly peaceful and resigned. "You bring me good news," she said, and began to prepare herself with all sweetness and devotion. With touching humility she was anxious to say to each and all of her daughters that if, by any chance, she had ever unwittingly given them any pain, she deeply regretted having done so, but as speech had become very difficult she dictated these last messages to her Secretary, who brought back loving messages to the dear invalid from her children. The Papal blessing had been imparted after Extreme Unction, and a telegram from Rome brought a further blessing, which gave great comfort and courage. She was perfectly conscious, and had the welfare of the Society constantly in her mind. On the 18th of the month she expressed a desire to nominate a Mother Vicar, and had hoped to be able to write her wishes on the matter herself. Finding this to be impossible, she allowed her Secretary to write what was necessary. When the document was brought to her for her signature she could hardly write her name. She left to her family Mother Mary of the Sacred Heart as Mother and Guide, and Heaven approved her choice, and ratified it as a per-

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manency. The Mother Assistants-General of Marie Réparatrice, hearing that the Mother General had received the Last Sacraments, telegraphed for permission to come to her, and on the eve of her Feast she smilingly received them, and so cheerful did she appear, that they almost dared to hope that she might yet be spared to them for a little. She was pleased and interested in all the little gifts she received for her Feast, and repeatedly begged her Secretary to give her love and thanks to her dear children. She was not able to talk to each one of her Community, so she sent for the Mother Superior and the Mother Assistant, and begged them to give to each member a little medal, with her parting blessing.

The Mother Superior said afterwards that such unselfish thought for others, in one on the very verge of the grave, was most striking. Her Secretary said one had to be very careful in telling her of all the prayers and devotions offered on her behalf. She would be much overcome and weep, murmuring: "My dear children, thank them for me." She could by now hardly speak; the painful, difficult utterance seemed to make the more emphatic the few words she could say. When she could no longer speak at all a pressure of the hand expressed what she would have fain uttered. During her whole illness she had the great consolation of daily Communion. She needed the Heavenly Feast, for to her bodily sufferings was

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added the misery of great mental depression. "I can but say God's Will be done," she said one day, "for I can no longer pray. I cannot fix my attention on anything, so extreme is my bodily weakness."

She hardly ever complained of her sufferings, though to such a sensitive nature as hers they must have been excessive. She could get no rest, her mouth was parched, and she was perpetually thirsty.

"I knew I should suffer," she said one day to her Secretary, "but I never thought it would be as painful as this." And once she was heard to murmur: "I shall bless whoever tells me that the end is near." However, her patience was wonderful. The calm of her countenance, her limpid gaze, her unclouded intellect, continued to the very last, and even led those around her sometimes to hope that the malady might not prove immediately fatal.

Finally, on 6th October, she had a slight seizure. The priest and the doctor came at once. She was able to make her profession of Faith and an act of resignation to God's Will. She also received Holy Viaticum, and with difficulty managed to swallow a minute particle of the Sacred Host. It was her last Communion. On the morning of 8th October, during the recital of the Angelus, Mother Mary of St Maurice peacefully breathed her last. The end was so quiet that those who

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watched hardly knew the exact moment in which she passed from this vale of tears to the possession and enjoyment of that Divine Truth which had ever been her guiding star here below.

The peace and rest of her face in death was most touching as her Community, overpowered with grief, wept and prayed around her. They had lost the most loving and beloved of Mothers, and never, never would she be forgotten. Comfort and consolation were obtained in the Mass which was almost immediately celebrated for the venerated Departed. Soon letters of condolence came from all parts. We will quote from a few. They will show our readers that we have hardly sufficiently dwelt on the virtues of the second Mother General of Marie Réparatrice. The most precious tribute of respect is the one written by Pope Pius X with his own hand. The Holy Father prays "that the peace of the Saints may rest on the blessed soul just departed, and that her afflicted Sisters in religion may receive the consolation of Holy Faith."

"I join myself with you," wrote Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, "in recommending to God the elect woman you are now mourning. She knew how to win the love of her daughters, and was a living example of religious perfection."

The Bishop of Limerick, Mgr. O'Dwyer, not only wrote to the nuns, but when, a short time after the sad event, he was preaching at the

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Novena of Reparation in the Convent Chapel at Limerick, he said, in his opening remarks, that he considered Mother Mary of St Maurice to have been one of those singularly gifted persons whose lives are in all respects admirable.

The news of her death was a great blow to the Communities in Spain. In Seville the Rev. Father Michael Sanchez Prieto, S.J., made a few eloquent and touching references to the late Superior-General at the last conference of the exercises. "Do not weep," he concluded, "for your Mother, who is surely already in Heaven in the joyful possession of the Sovereign Good. Imitate her and rejoice in her joy. She will not forget you from her high place above."

The Very Reverend Father Bailly, Superior-General of the Fathers of the Assumption, who had known Mother Mary of St Maurice well, sent the following touching letter to the Mother Vicar:

You have lost a Mother and a Superior who was a Saint. She was both spiritually minded and practical. Her kindness of heart, her self-possession and her energy made her an ideal ruler and guide. I sympathise deeply with you in your great sorrow, and I pray that God will raise up a similar Superior and Mother to fill the vacant place. After her labours for the peace of Jerusalem here below she is now at rest in the Heavenly City. She beholds her Lord. Ought not we who knew and loved her to rejoice in her joy? I will, however, say Mass for her to-morrow, knowing that the

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blessings of the Holy Sacrifice will descend on her dear daughters in religion.

One of the fathers who, towards the last, gave her Holy Communion, exclaimed as he left her bedside: "What a true Saint! She is about to leave you, but she will be of infinite service to you all in Heaven!" And he wrote later: "Her process of canonisation might justifiably be at once begun."

The Rev. Father Mourier, who attended her at the Nursing Home, observes: "What a beautiful life hers has been! Her good deeds were indeed manifold. I remember her, so gentle, so sweet, so resigned and united to Our Lord! She was in truth the real *Réparatrice* nun, thinking nothing of herself, living entirely to her Lord. You have lost your Mother on earth but you have gained a powerful protector in Heaven. She deeply loved her daughters: she will watch over them and obtain for them the virtues of generosity, humility and unselfishness. Your grief is but natural, but you know that your Mother is with God and that her spirit is also with you."

The while these expressions of admiration and sympathy were coming in from every side, the Society was occupied in fulfilling the last sad duties towards the beloved Mother.

The Requiem was celebrated in the Chapel at Liège, on the 10th of October. Madame Goulet and several of Mother Mary of St Maurice's nephews

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and nieces were present. Amongst them was her grandnephew, Georges de Barri, a most promising youth, who, less than two years after, fell gloriously on the field of honour in the Great War. After the Requiem the coffin was placed in a Chapel Ardente, where it remained, whilst the nuns and many friends continually watched and prayed, until the departure for Rome on the 14th.

On Sunday, the 19th of October, the mortal remains of Mother Mary of St Maurice were finally placed beside the coffin of Mother Mary of Jesus in the vault, which the Barons d'Hooghvoorst had built for their Mother's last resting-place.

On the pure white marble slab erected to the beloved memory of Mother Mary of St Maurice is inscribed "Pax Christi," a fitting tribute to her humble, pure and most peaceful soul. The day after the final obsequies Mass was celebrated by Mgr. de Raymond at the little altar within the Mortuary Chapel. Henceforth from above, where they are together in perfect peace and love, the two first Mothers of Marie Réparatrice will watch over and guide their beloved Society.

This aspiration is expressed in a dream, too full of simplicity and charm to be left out of this narrative. She who so naïvely relates it was dear to Mother Mary of St Maurice as are to all Mothers advanced in years these children, brimful of youth and energy, who appear as stars of hope in the evening of life. "It was soon after

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the death of our beloved Mother. Heaven seemed to open before me and I found myself at the feet of the Madonna. I knelt before her entranced, too dazzled to gaze steadily on her beauty. Then near her I beheld our two Mothers, one each side of Our Lady and so close to her! It was indeed a consoling vision, but I felt surprise, for the Mother who has just gone from us seemed to be as high in Heaven as the venerated Mother Foundress, whom we hope soon to see upon our altars. The Madonna seemed to read my mind. Bending towards me and drawing nearer to herself the two beloved forms, she seemed to say: 'They are alike precious.' My eyes opened and the vision faded, but the sweet and encouraging words were still ringing in my ears." It was but a dream, of course, but perhaps the truth might be permitted to penetrate the misty shadow of a dream. Who can say?

Another experience shows how, to the very end, God blessed the love which Mother Mary of St Maurice bore to her children.

When she became too feeble to listen to all her letters her Secretary would glance over them and tell her of their contents. On 20th September a nun wrote that as a spiritual bouquet for Mother Mary of St Maurice she was offering many Stations of the Cross, Masses, Communions and prayers, and she added: "I beg my Guardian Angel to whisper to you my love and gratitude, and I

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am sure that he will bring me your blessing." On hearing this message the Mother General observed : "Little Mother Marie de X.?" Then in a minute or two, "I have just now seen her." Her utterance was very indistinct, and the Secretary, thinking she had said "I shall soon see her," replied in some surprise: "But only the Mother Assistants-General, you know, are coming; they will not go near the Convent where that Mother is." "I know," answered the invalid; "you do not understand. I have just seen Marie de X.," and she added: "I blessed her." The Secretary said: "I suppose it was a dream," to which Mother Mary of St Maurice replied "Yes," and no more was said.

Some weeks after the death of the Mother General, when her Secretary had returned to Rome, Mother Marie de X. wrote as follows :

I, not realising how ill our loved and lamented Mother was, wrote to her for her Feast, and, as doubtless you read my letter to her, I feel I can tell you of my experience. I asked for her blessing through my Guardian Angel, and on 20th September, as I was sewing and uniting myself in spirit with the Masses, of which I offered three each morning for our beloved Mother, I suddenly felt impelled to kneel down. The impression was so strong, that though at first I resisted it, it flashed into my mind that it might be a warning of our dear Mother's death, so I knelt down, recited a *De Profundis*, and wept bitterly. Then I seemed to see our Mother's face. She looked on me

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tenderly, and said, "Dearest child, I bless you with all my heart. When I am in Heaven I will watch over you!" I cried out: "Oh, dearest Mother, do get well! We are praying so hard; tell me if you will get well," but I heard and saw no more, only my Guardian Angel whispered that he had taken visible form to bear my message to our Mother, and because she was so holy I had been permitted to once more behold her upon earth. I rose from my knees, filled with deep peace, thanking God and Our Lady for my Vocation of Reparation.

Our task is done, the tale of this life of self-sacrifice is told. But will this little book give a faint idea of the life and work of the beloved Mother Mary of St Maurice? We trust that it may do so, and that our dear Mother, from her high place in Heaven, will pardon the imperfections of our feeble efforts to do her honour, and intercede perpetually for us all before the Throne of God.

THE END.









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